



Panto treasure to be found at the Corran Halls

We have a Love Oban voucher winner Find out who on page 6

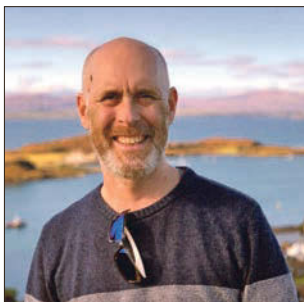
Clare's courage



Bunessan officer nominated for bravery award

• See page 8 for more

Adrian's legacy



McCaig's turns purple as father remembered

• See page 7 for more



Art group's focus on festival cheer

School nativities may have been cancelled again this Christmas due to the Covid pandemic - see page 10 - but Oban's Winter Festival brought festive cheer to the town last Friday.

The weekend saw the start of a 10-day programme of fun events culminating with a Tartan Dash, Haggis Hurling, Reindeer Parade and much, much more this weekend.

Last Saturday, in Oban's recently opened £3 million Rockfield Centre, St Columba's Primary School pupil Abdul Riaz, left, who celebrates his seventh birthday soon, and seven year-old Robert Hodge, right, a pupil at Rockfield Primary School, crafted Christmas wreaths at the Art Explorers Oban group, which offers creative art sessions for children throughout the year.

Tonight (Thursday November 25) sees late night shopping for buying presents, followed by food and craft markets on Saturday, before choirs and candles in Glencruitten Church on Sunday.

Around sunset on St Andrew's Day, Tuesday November 30, a Saltire will be seen high above Oban Bay, with McCaig's Tower and the town - or maybe a city by next year? - adding to the spectacular sky-scape.

LATE MAIL SEES JABS MISSED

by Sandy Neil
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

Taynuilt residents missed lifesaving Covid vaccines due to first class NHS appointment letters arriving a day or two after their clinics, and up to eight days after they were post-marked.

More than a dozen villagers reported on social media receiving late booster appointment letters for a clinic at Taynuilt Village Hall on Thursday

November 11. On the Taynuilt What's Happening Facebook page, they said their letters were dated November 4, post-marked November 5, and posted first class - yet were delivered up to eight days later on November 13, missing the clinic on November 11.

On the webpage, Taynuilt Community Council are asking for information about problems with Royal Mail. Its chairman David Sloss said on Monday afternoon: 'It's been up

nine hours and 107 folk have already reported problems in the last month.'

The Royal Mail chief executive officer's office has apologised - blaming staff shortages - to one villager, who also that week received an appointment letter from a Paisley hospital for a serious condition, on the day the procedure was due 90 miles away.

Earlier, in an ongoing Oban Times investigation into late local mail, we revealed an Oban resident missed an

operation after four first class letters from a Glasgow hospital, postmarked October 12, 13, 19 and 20, all arrived on the day she was due for surgery on October 26 - 14 days after the first letter was posted. The Royal Mail also blamed disruption on staff shortages.

This month, Taynuilt was hit by a flood of late vaccine appointment letters. Some on the community website didn't know whether to blame the 'total

Continued on page 3.

SPOTLIGHT
musical theatre group

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TREASURE ISLAND

2TH - 4TH DECEMBER | CORRAN HALLS, OBAN | 7.30PM EACH NIGHT + 2PM ON 4TH

A BEN CROCKER PANTOMIME

OT

Petition follows plan for cut in number of headteachers

by Sandy Neil
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

Scotland's biggest teaching union has warned Argyll and Bute Council's plans for a new role of 'executive headteacher' will reduce the number of heads from 84 to 14.

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) union has now launched a petition against the proposals.

The EIS petition says the plan 'seeks to establish school clusters' overseen by the executive heads, 'which would decrease the current number of headteachers from 84 to around 14' and has led to 'significant [EIS] member concern about how this will affect schools, teachers and pupils'.

The union said school leadership was critical and every school and its community should have a headteacher in

post, adding: 'Our starting point should always be to locate leadership as close as possible to practitioner practice.'

The petition states: 'We believe these changes are simply a cost-cutting exercise that will not empower schools and support attainment but rather will damage educational delivery, quality and equity in Argyll and Bute.'

Another petition against the council's changes has been started by Wise4All, an Argyll group set up to inform Argyll communities about the proposed changes.

'In June this year the Education Change Programme was unveiled by Argyll and Bute Council,' its website says. 'It proposes far-reaching changes to our children's education: individual head teachers would be replaced by one super-head, responsible

for many schools. The quick action by parents in Dunoon and Cowal along with unprecedented correspondence to elected members raising concern secured a pause in the process to allow for necessary consultation of such a significant change.

'A Dunoon cluster is proposed involving seven primary schools and one secondary with a total roll of 1,450 pupils; on Bute, two primaries plus Rothesay Joint Campus; in Kintyre, a combined roll of 885 in one secondary and six primaries.

'These clusters would be 'early adopters' with further roll out across all Argyll and Bute schools. Plans for other areas are not available.

'In the classroom teachers and support staff, 'would become part of a cluster and not part of a school and could

'We believe these changes are simply a cost-cutting exercise that will not empower schools and support attainment.'

therefore be moved accordingly either on a temporary basis to provide cover or on a longer term basis.'

It was also envisaged pupils could move between 'cluster' schools 'to take advantage of the facilities best suited to particular areas of learning'.

The council said at the time that it had drawn up the plans 'to discover if new and improved ways of working could be implemented', taking account of the 'significant geographic' challenges the au-

thority faces. Council papers said the model 'could deliver potential savings'.

The papers added: 'The challenge of filling teacher vacancies in many rural parts of the area is an ongoing issue.'

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesperson said: 'No decisions have been made regarding the future of our education service. We are in the process of carrying out a thorough, open and accessible consultation, listening to all stakeholders, and the feedback from this will be reported to the Community Services Committee.

'We want the best outcomes for our children and young people and they are at the heart of all our work. We would encourage everyone to get involved and give us their feedback through the consultation process.'

POLICE FILES

Theft

A man has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal for allegedly stealing a purse from the Oban Inn, Stafford Street, at 00.30am on Monday November 15.

Charged

At 6pm on Thursday November 18 at an address in Soroba Road, Oban, it is alleged a man acted in a threatening or abusive manner towards a woman.

A man, aged 70, was arrested and charged with threatening or abusive behaviour and a communications offence and released on an undertaking to appear at Oban Sheriff Court.

Attempted theft

Between 11am on Monday November 15 and 11am on Tuesday November 16, at Westbay Apartments, Corran Esplanade, Oban, it is alleged a cupboard in a common close was damaged in an attempt to gain entry and steal items. Inquiries continue and police are appealing for anyone with information to contact 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Police assault

At 2.45 pm on Friday November 19, at Oban Police Station, a man, aged 31, acted in a threatening and abusive manner, assaulted police officers and resisted arrest. He was arrested and charged and kept in court to appear at Oban Sheriff Court.

Drink driving

Police stopped a car on the A839 at Bunessan, Mull, and the driver, a man, aged 49, failed a roadside breath test. He was arrested and charged with driving under the influence of alcohol and released on an undertaking to appear at Oban Sheriff Court.

OBAN SCOTLAND IN ONE PLACE



"Thanks to everyone who is already getting behind the bid for city status.

Cities come in all shapes and sizes. Bidding for city status is one step in ensuring that Oban has as much chance for a successful future as other parts of Scotland. It's about creating opportunities for investment to progress things that matter to local people."

Councillor Robin Currie,
Leader of Argyll and Bute Council

Help attract what our future needs.

Back the city status bid.

Back Oban city status
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/obancity



Posties ready to mail your Christmas cards, from left to right, cub Fraser Pollock, aged 10, scouts Oliver Clark, 12, and Aoiheann Clark, 11, beaver Lewis West, six, and scout patrol leader Isaac Charlton, 12.

Scout post back in town

Scout post is back in town this Christmas, raising funds to repair Oban's scout hall on Corran Brae.

Postboxes can be found in Jackson Butchers, Oban Cycles, Albany newsagents, Alba, Tesco, Oban Photographic Centre and Dunbeg Village Store.

The cost will be 50p per Christmas card and the boxes

close at 5pm on Wednesday December 8.

Group scout leader Graham West said: 'We had 1,000 Christmas cards to sort last year. The event is the biggest fundraising we can do. We have real issues with the hut. There is a massive damp problem in the hall. One of the gables is totally rotten. We are looking at thousands in repair.'



Find and Seek Trail

The Oban Times has teamed up with BID4Oban on a Christmas Find and Seek Trail, with the chance to win Love Oban vouchers.

The trail is suitable for pre-school youngsters up to Primary 3. See next week's Oban Times for more details.

Details of probe into Islay councillor revealed

Boundaries Scotland has released details of its investigation into Argyll and Bute councillor Alastair Redman from Islay, after he was suspended and expelled by the Scottish Conservative party.

Councillor Redman, who represents the Kintyre and the Islands ward, was suspended for the second time by the Tories in August 2021 pending an investigation, though the party gave no detail why.

Last week, a spokesperson for the Scottish Conservatives confirmed: 'Following disciplinary proceedings, Alastair Redman is no longer a member of the party.'

Councillor Redman, who has changed his status to Independent, said claims he used different names to respond to a public consultation were used by Central Tories as 'a tool' to take him out of the party.

Boundaries Scotland, the body responsible for reviewing the number of wards for local government elections, has now given details of its investigation into Councillor Redman.

Boundaries Scotland explained it was 'directed by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 to conduct a review of electoral arrangements for the six council areas with inhabited islands.'

'The commission conducted a 12-week public consultation on its proposals, for councillor numbers and ward boundaries, for Argyll and Bute Council area from November 4 2020 to January 26 2021.'

Same source

'The commission invited respondents to submit comments via its consultation site. In late December 2020 it became apparent that a number of responses, opposing the commission's proposed Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward, came from the same source. One of those responses was from Councillor Redman.'

'At this time we phoned Councillor Redman and he admitted submitting responses purporting to be from other people as part of our statutory consultation.'

'Councillor Redman advised he had notified the individuals



Alastair Redman.

to advise the responses could not be considered by the commission and that they would be deleted. As far as we are aware none of those names submitted a later response. There were no further suspicious responses received after that telephone call.'

'In February 2021 the commission wrote a letter of complaint to the Commission for Ethical Standards in Public Life, copied to Argyll and Bute Council.'

'In late March the

Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life responded and advised they are taking no further action on the letter of complaint regarding Councillor Redman's actions.'

'The commission was disappointed in this response and agreed to write to [the] Scottish Government regarding the Councillor Code of Conduct.'

'In June 2021 the commission wrote again to Councillor Redman stating its disappointment with his actions. Councillor Redman did not respond to this.'

We asked what led to the investigation. A Boundaries Scotland spokesperson said: 'Staff of Boundaries Scotland noted that a large number of responses to its consultation portal were coming from email addresses with foreign domains (.lv and .ru) as well as other unusual domains and these were deemed suspicious.'

'All came from the same browser and following an internal IT investigation, the same IP address. All the responses argued against the commission's proposals

concerning Islay, using similar language. The first response from that browser and IP address came from Councillor Redman.'

Councillor Alastair Redman reiterated: 'I certainly don't believe for a second that helping out my constituents fill out forms for the boundary changes in what was a successful campaign to stop the changes was the wrong thing to do.'

'However it is my personal opinion that this matter was used by the Central Office Tories as a tool for taking myself out of the party.'

'Maverick'

'I believe the real reason for my expulsion was myself being unwilling to blindly tow the party line and for being too much of a maverick and independently minded for the modern iteration of the Scottish Conservatives.'

'Putting loyalty to your constituents before loyalty to your party will often put a target on your back unfortunately.'

'I will be seeking re-election next year as an independent candidate in the local elections

and I promise to continue to put the people before any political party or special interest group without fear or favour.'

The former postmaster in Portnahaven Post Office, Islay, added: 'I would add that when I was in the post office I used to help out my constituents fill out forms all the time.'

'So I really don't see the issue here.'

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesperson said: 'We are aware of and accept the decision made by the Ethical Standards Commission that there has been no breach of the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.'

A Scottish Government spokesperson added: 'It is important that those in elected office, including councillors, adhere to the highest standards of behaviour. The Councillors' Code of Conduct which sets out openly and clearly the standards that are expected of councillors was recently revised and approved by the Scottish Parliament and is expected to come into effect on December 7.'

Late mail sees jobs missed

Continued from page one.

shambles' on the Royal Mail or on the NHS booster programme.

Others didn't know if they needed a letter or not: one read on the NHS Highland website letters were necessary, while another heard clinics were taking anyone as long as it was six months after their last vaccine. But many saved their ire for Royal Mail. 'Booster appointment missed because of late mail,' wrote one resident. 'Booster appointment letter arrived eight days after it was sent, and the day after the appointment,' a second said.

'Just received my letter today for appointment on the 11th,' concurred a third on November 13: 'post mark 5th, first class.'

'We just received that letter dated 4 November too,' said a fourth: 'Sadly today is the 13 and appointment on 11.'

Rescheduling her Covid booster, she told The Oban Times: 'We were told to go to Dalmally this Wednesday 24 after 10am. We will have to wait and queue like many other Taynuilt people and all the Dalmally folk.'

'Ours were post-marked the 5th, first class, but we only received them on the 10th,' wrote a fifth person, just a day before her appointment on

November 11. 'We were one of the lucky ones,' she said.

Her envelope states it was delivered by the Royal Mail. 'Why are we paying for first class mail if it takes five days?' she asked. On November 13, she received two first class letters different senders had sent her on November 1, 12 days earlier.

A sixth Taynuilt resident, whose late first class letter was also delivered by the Royal Mail, emailed his complaint to Argyll MP Brendan O'Hara and MSP Jenni Minto and forwarded it to Royal Mail's chief executive officer Simon Thompson.

'Today (13/11/21) my wife and I received letters informing us of appointments for Covid booster vaccinations [on November 11]. These were franked on 5/11/21 and have, therefore, taken eight days to deliver. This is well outwith Royal Mail's required delivery obligations.'

'Were this an isolated incident, I would put it down to the occasional lapse any business can have but it is the second instance this week. On Tuesday I returned from an appointment at The Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley to find the appointment letter waiting for me. This appointment was to investigate a seri-

ous condition. On both these occasions I was able to attend due to my own initiative in establishing times and dates.'

'The local Post Office is hearing a constant stream of complaints about the same experiences.'

'Missed appointments cost the NHS about £150 per time and puts patient health at risk, sometimes seriously so.'

'What right has Royal Mail to show such arrogance and disregard for their legal obligations.'

He received a reply from the Royal Mail's chairman and chief executive office, offering 'sincere apologies for any inconvenience this matter has caused'.

'I have been in contact with the manager at Oban Delivery Office and I am advised that they are working hard to get all mail out, however, they are currently experiencing resourcing issues. This has led to some disruption to deliveries for which I wholeheartedly apologise.'

Many villagers paid tribute to their posties. 'Our lovely post men and ladies do an amazing job,' wrote one. 'Post delay not their fault.'

'It's frustrating when a parcel or letter you're expecting next day takes three weeks to arrive. But you all do a smashing job.'

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POLICE FILES

Breach of bail

At 12.15 pm on Sunday November 14 at Skerryvore Gardens, Oban, it is alleged a man, aged 27, breached his bail conditions set by Oban Sheriff Court by contacting a woman. The man was subsequently charged with the offence and kept in custody to appear at Oban Sheriff Court.

Air weapon

On Tuesday November 16, at an address in Catalina Avenue, Oban, police carried out a search of a property and recovered an air weapon that allegedly did not have the required certification. A man, aged 27, was charged with the offence and a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Vandalism

Between Saturday November 13 and Sunday November 14 at Ellenabeich car park, Isle of Seil, it is alleged a parked car was vandalised. Enquiries continue and police are appealing for anyone with information to contact 101 or through Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Game for Geordie nets thousands of pounds

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Thousands of pounds have been handed over to Oban's Macmillan Day Bed Unit in memory of life-long Celtic supporter Geordie McGhee.

Mr McGhee's family and organisers of a friendly Celtic vs Rangers match that raised £9,000 visited Lorn and Islands Hospital on Friday to present the cheque.

The 64-year-old who died on June 15 this year was a stalwart of Oban No.1 Celtic Supporters Club.

Club President John MacInnes said fundraisers were 'blown away' by the town's generosity.

And it is that strong community spirit that could boost Oban's success of being granted city status next year as part of the Queen's platinum

jubilee celebrations. Oban is a strong contender to become one of the UK's smallest but friendliest cities and that is one of the reasons why Argyll and Bute selected the town for its city bid. The Game for Geordie match at Mossfield on October 17 attracted hundreds of spectators, said Mr MacInnes who added: 'It doesn't matter which team you support. When you are faced with cancer, it doesn't discriminate. It takes no sides.'

Organisers had hoped for a goal of one or two thousands pounds but the final total topped their expectations.

'We were all completely blown away by people's generosity but this is Oban so we shouldn't have been surprised,' said Mr MacInnes.

The match was organised by Neil Beaton of Oban No.1 Celtic Supporters Club and Gareth Evans from Oban



Geordie's widow Katie McGhee with Oban No.1 Celtic Supporters Club President John MacInnes and one of the Game for Geordie organisers Neil Beaton who handed over the £9,000 cheque to the day bed unit, received by unit manager Donna Mackenzie.

Loyal Rangers Supporters Club. In the end Celtic won 3-2 but it was a close finish and was played in 'a sporting manner,' said Mr MacInnes.

'Geordie would've been watching the game from above,' he added. Hot pies and sausage rolls went on sale and the game was followed by a raffle and charity auction of signed Celtic and Rangers tops and memorabilia at The View on Oban's George Street, who sponsored the event.



Geordie McGhee was a life-long Celtic supporter much loved and missed by family and friends.



Game for Geordie – the Celtic team who won the match 3-2.



Game for Geordie – the Rangers team.



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Countdown to Oban reindeer parade and lights switch-on

BID4Oban in partnership with the Rotary Club are delighted to be staging the Reindeer Parade this Saturday, leaving the Corran Halls at 5pm.

The parade will be led by Oban Pipe Band, followed by the reindeer pulling Santa in his sleigh and will make its way through the town to Station Square where Santa will then turn on the Christmas lights.

One big change to the parade this year is that the reindeer will be heading straight off to their next destination once they have dropped Santa off. This also helps with Covid control protocols as it helps keep crowds from forming round the animals. Despite this being an outdoor event, social distancing should be maintained where possible.

The lights switch-on is brought to you again by the Business Improvement District with Oban Electrics, Oban Community Council, West Highland Housing Association and Oban Common Good Fund having pooled their resources to provide new lights for the town this year.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, some of the lights will not be delivered in time for the switch-on.

They will, however, be up the following week and will truly light up Oban for a spectacular Christmas 2021.

This doesn't mean Santa's job of lighting up the town will be in vain. Oban Electrics are pulling out all the stops to make sure that the trees are fully decorated and there will be plenty of lights for Saturday's big event.

Cracker of a start to winter festival

Oban's 10-day winter festival got off to a cracker of a start.

Creative sessions at The Rockfield Centre on Saturday saw families helping make a Holly and Ivy Winter Festival montage that will go on display on the final weekend.

Also in the first week there were food and craft markets, a Winter Wellness Festival at Recentre in Soroba Road, a chance to get a name written in Japanese, a guided tour of Glencruitten's Cathedral of Trees and the inside of McCaig's Tower being turned into a night-time photo gallery.

Check out what's still to come at obanwinterfestival.com

Highlights to look forward to on Saturday November 27 include a Tartan Dash run or walk at Ganavan at 9.30am, followed by haggis hurling on the shinty pitch then the reindeer parade leaving the Corran Halls at 5pm.



Dance troupe Taps Aff entertained festive shoppers at the Corran Halls Food and Craft Market on Saturday.



CHRISTMAS DEALS FROM US TO THE PEOPLE OF OBAN

TAKEAWAY DEALS	SIT IN PARTY DEALS	SIT IN CURRY DEALS
<p>Deal 1 Any 9" Pizza, 1 Peri Chicken Wrap, 1 Fries, 1 Mozzarella Sticks, 2 Cans of Pepsi £11.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 1 Any Chicken Meal £5.50</p>	<p>Curry Deal for 1 Veg Pakora, Chicken Curry, Korma OR Bhoona, Rice OR Nan £9.99</p>
<p>Deal 2 Any 2 9" Pizzas, 5 Peri Peri Wings or Strips, 1 Peri Peri Chicken Rice Box, 2 Fries, 2 Cans of Pepsi £19.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 2 Any 2 Chicken Meals £9.99</p>	<p>Curry Deal for 2 Mixed Pakora, Any 2 Chicken Curries, 1 Rice, 1 Plain or Garlic Nan £16.99 (Lamb +£1 per dish)</p>
<p>Deal 3 1 Full Peri Peri Chicken, Any 12" Pizza, 5 Fried Strips or Wings, 4 Peri Peri Chicken Thigh, Peri Chips, Mozzarella Sticks and 2 x 2L Pepsi £19.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 3 Any 9" Pizza + Any 2 Chicken Meals £14.99</p>	<p>Curry Deal for 3 Large Mixed Pakora, Any 3 Chicken Curries, 3 Rice and 1 Plain or Garlic Nan £26.99 (Lamb +£1 per dish)</p>
<p>Deal 4 Any 2 12" Pizzas, 1 Peri Peri infused Donner Kebab, 3 Fried Drumsticks, 2 x Potato Wedges and 2 Cans of Pepsi £21.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 4 Any 2 9" Pizzas + Any 2 Chicken Meals £19.99</p>	<p>Curry Deal for 4 Large Mixed Starter Plate, Any 4 Chicken Curries, 2 Rice & 2 Plain or Garlic Nan, and 4 Chocolate Fudge Cake Slices £39.99</p>
<p>Deal 5 9" Pizza, 5 Peri Peri Strips and 5 Wings, Peri Chicken Quesadilla, 2 x Onion Rings, 2 x Fries, 2 x Chicken Nuggets, 2 x 500ml Pepsi £23.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 6 Any 2 12" Pizzas, Any 2 Chicken Meals + 2 Peri Fries £26.99</p>	<p>KIDS DEALS Kids Party Deal 1 Chips, Chicken Nuggets, Onion Rings & Mozzarella Sticks with a Small Ice Cream Shake £5.99</p>
<p>Deal 6 Peri Peri Chicken Burger, Fried Chicken Burger, 5 Peri Peri Wings or Strips, 1 Chicken Quesadilla or Burrito, 1 Peri Chicken Rice Box, 2 Fries, 2 Peri Chips, 2 Spicy Rice, 2 x 2L Pepsi £23.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 8 Full Peri Peri Chicken, Any 2 12" Pizzas, Any 2 Chicken Meals + Any 2 Sides £34.99</p>	<p>Kids Party Deal 2 Any Chicken, Beef or Cheese Burger with Chips and Onion Rings with a Small Ice Cream Shake £5.99</p>

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OT

Around Oban

KAY MCDONALD

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Only a month to go now until the big day and I'm looking forward to it so much after the strange time we had last Christmas.

The thought of a proper Christmas with friends and family is wonderful.

Being able to attend events and have Christmas nights out is so much more special this year and if last year proved anything it was that Christmas is not about the presents - although they're very nice - it's about the people you get to spend it with.

Being part of such a lovely community means that any chance to get out and about and see people is something to be celebrated, no matter how you do it. It can be bumping into people in the shops, arranging to go to the cinema or a quick cuppa in one of our scrumptious cafes.

Even though Oban's Winter Festival is almost at an end, we still have lots to look forward to in the

WHERE IS THIS?



coming month. Spotlight Musical Theatre Group's pantomime 'Treasure Island' at the Corran Halls will be a hoot, I'm sure, and there are three films coming to the cinema that I want to see as well as a screening of 'Anything Goes' this Sunday, then 'Christmas with Andre' on December 4 and 5.

I can't think of a better way of getting into the Christmas Spirit.

It's also time to get my Christmas shopping sorted and with late night shopping tonight (Thursday) and Winter Festival markets this weekend, I'm sure I'll not be stuck for ideas and if I am, there are always LoveOban vouchers.

Last week's photograph was of the side of the Corran Halls. This week might be a bit trickier.

Oban councillor cleared after 'malicious' complaint

An Oban councillor under investigation for permitting an 'inaccurate malicious representation' of a headteacher on her Facebook post has been cleared of breaching the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

The ruling, published online by the Standards Commission for Scotland, concerned Argyll and Bute Councillor Julie McKenzie, the SNP representative for Oban North and Lorn, whom the document called 'the Respondent'.

The Standards Commission for Scotland, an independent body which encourages high standards in public life, explained: "The complaint concerned the Respondent's conduct in sharing, on Facebook, an Oban Times article of 8 July 2021 entitled "Stop Chinese Whispering online, headteacher tells parents".

"The complainer alleged that, by sharing the article in question, the Respondent

had permitted an "inaccurate malicious representation" of a council employee (being the school's headteacher).

"The Acting Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC) advised that a third party had made the following two comments on the Respondent's post: "In this date (sic) and age, a Head Teacher who uses this kind of language brings shame on this school, community and his Argyll & Bute Council employers. Time for the school to be inspected by HMIe! For the sake of the pupils, parents, community and staff, this cannot be allowed to 'rumble on' any more"; and "How long is A&B Council going to do nothing about this?"

"The Acting ESC noted that the complaint also concerned the Respondent's response to these comments, which was as follows: "Hopefully not for much longer. I have no words!". "The complainer alleged

that, in her response, the Respondent had misinterpreted the language used by the headteacher and implied that the headteacher was racist and used racist language. The Acting ESC advised that: "There was no dispute that the Respondent made the comment on Facebook. While some of the responses to the article condemned the headteacher for using the term "Chinese Whispers", on the basis that the term was racist, the Respondent did not appear to have engaged in this criticism.

"The Respondent's position was that her response to the comments concerned the school's uniform policy, rather than being an endorsement of any criticisms of the headteacher's choice of words.

"In light of the Respondent's explanation and a lack of other evidence to support the complainer's position,

the burden of proof had not been discharged. As such, the Acting ESC was of the view that it had not been established that the Respondent's response or actions in sharing the article lacked respect or courtesy. The Acting ESC further noted that the content of comments and posts from third parties were outwith the control of the Respondent."

Councillor Julie McKenzie said: "This was a malicious and spurious complaint, which appeared to be an orchestrated attempt to silence me and stop me from representing constituents views on a community issue.

"Whilst I welcome the due process of investigation, which clears my name, it is also important to highlight that complaints such as this are a complete waste of time and resource from the public purse."

Argyll and Bute Council chose not to respond.



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BID4Oban's town ambassador Kay McDonald, left, and the winner of £250 of LoveOban Vouchers, Linda Robb from Dunbeg.

Lucky Linda wins vouchers

A lucky Oban Times reader has won £250 Love Oban Vouchers donated by BID4Oban.

Entrants to the competition had to collect three tokens over three weeks from October 28, and pop them to us by November 16 to be included in a prize draw.

The winning entry was Linda Robb of Dunbeg. 'It's an amazing amount of money,' the retired marine biologist at SAMS said: 'You have to be in it to win it!'

Linda plans to spend her 250 'Oban Pounds' on gifts for family and friends, bits and bobs for Christmas lunch, and donations to two local causes: the Hope Kitchen, and Oban's MS Therapy Centre.

Love Oban Vouchers, the Oban Pound, were set up by BID4Oban to encourage spending in local shops, restaurants and businesses.

In denominations of £10, £20, £50, they are the perfect gift for any occasion, and can be used in over 70 businesses.

They are available from the BID4Oban Office, Oban Phoenix Cinema, The Sports Shop Oban, Alba Art Shop, Websters of Oban Photographic Centre, Button Nose and Etive Restaurant.

BID4Oban's town ambassador Kay McDonald said: 'We are committed to supporting local businesses and Love Oban Vouchers, which have proved hugely successful, which is why they are loved around the town.'

Adrian's legacy shines on

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

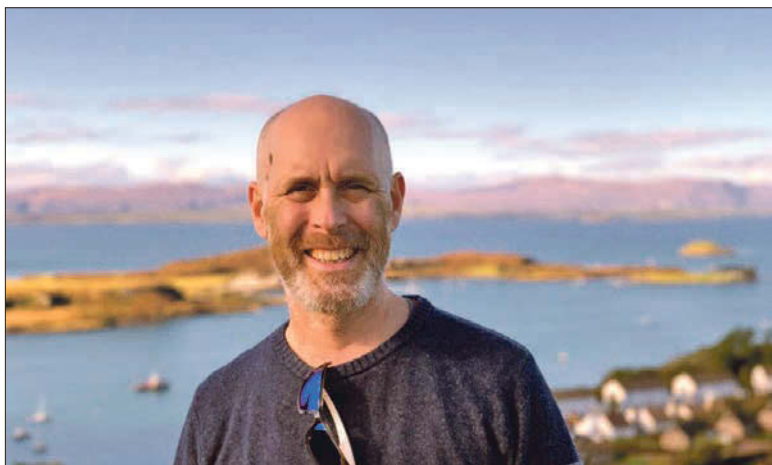
Pancreatic Cancer UK awareness ambassador and fundraiser Adrian Beard was remembered this week when McCaig's tower lit up purple.

Before the 50-year-old dad-of-two from Connel died from the disease earlier this year, one of his final wishes was for his legacy to live on and for the tower to be illuminated on November 18 - World Pancreatic Cancer Day.

Purple is the colour of Pancreatic Cancer UK's ribbon.

Pancreatic Cancer UK's head of Scotland & Northern Ireland Dawn Crosby said: 'It was wonderful to see the iconic McCaig's Tower lit purple for World Pancreatic Cancer Day.'

'Adrian was keen for this to happen again this year to raise awareness of the disease and highlight the urgent



need for earlier diagnosis. With nearly 1,000 people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in Scotland each year and more than half of those with the disease dying within three months of diagnosis, Adrian was determined to change this appalling statistic that has barely improved in 50 years.'

Adrian's best friend Finlo Cottier added: 'Adrian

brought great spirit and energy to everything he did, and showed great fortitude during his illness. Lighting up McCaig's tower in the purple colour of Pancreatic Cancer UK brings to mind those, like Adrian, who have passed due to pancreatic cancer, but also a reminder of the great fortitude of those currently living with the illness, of their families, of the pancreatic cancer

researchers and fundraisers, and of the medical teams. It's also just a joy to see the tower lit up, it brings a smile to your face.'

Former cub leader and Group Scout leader Adrian helped Pancreatic Cancer UK raise thousands of pounds of vital funds for research into the devastating disease just weeks before his death on September 10.

Pancreatic Cancer UK awareness ambassador and dad-of-two from Connel Adrian Beard who died on September 10 this year.

When PCUK launched the Big Step Forward 2021's 24-hour walkathon, Adrian was its first choice to be the face of Team Scotland raising £43,413.

Team Oban, with virtual entrants joining its side from as far away as Australia and Norway, brought in a whopping £14,664.

Ms Crosby added: 'Just 5.6 per cent of people in Scotland are still with us five years or more after their diagnosis, making pancreatic cancer Scotland's deadliest common cancer.'

'The disease's vague symptoms mean it often goes undetected until after it has spread to other areas of the body.'

'No screening or early detection tests exist to help doctors diagnose the disease, so, tragically, around 80 per cent of people are diagnosed when the cancer is at an advanced stage and it is too late for them to receive lifesaving

treatment. Early diagnosis is essential to give people the best chance of survival.'

Anyone experiencing one or more of the most common symptoms - back pain, indigestion, tummy pain and weight-loss - for more than four weeks should contact their GP and anyone with yellowing of the eyes or skin should immediately go to A&E.

'We do not want people to panic if they have some or all of these symptoms, because most people who do will not have pancreatic cancer. But it is absolutely vital that people learn more about this disease, talk to their loved ones and their GPs, and help us end the culture of silence that has surrounded pancreatic cancer for so long,' added Dawn.

For more information or to support the work of Pancreatic Cancer UK, please go to www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk

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OT

Villagers push ahead with road safety campaign

Villagers are pushing forward with their campaign to improve road safety in Taynuilt following a fatal accident on the A85 in October.

The A85, the main trunk road into Oban from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth, splits Taynuilt in two, with a crossroads in the middle. On October 10 around 1am, Taynuilt resident Jimmy Harris, 61, died following a suspected hit-and-run collision on the A85 at Kirkton. Police have arrested a 24-year-old man in connection with the incident. November's Taynuilt Community Council meeting heard villagers are gathering evidence of bad driver behaviour, as well as public support for improvements to road safety. Despite a 30mph speed limit on the A85 through Taynuilt, and a vehicle-activated speed sign warning fast drivers to slow down, many villagers continue to report incidents of speeding.

'Most locals can give examples of being overtaken by speeding vehicles within the 30mph limit,' said community

council chairman David Sloss. 'Evidence of speeding has been passed to Police Scotland and complaints made regarding the drivers of commercial vehicles to their head offices,' he said. Villagers monitored traffic passing the speed activated 30mph warning signs on the A85 for short periods each week day from November 15 to 19 for Road Safety Week.

'On average the signs were triggered at a rate of more than one speeding vehicle per minute,' Mr Sloss said.

A member of Taynuilt Primary School's parent council stood beside the flashing sign during school time and witnessed it being activated by speeders 29 times in 25 minutes. Taynuilt Primary School has issued reflective jackets to pupils and Argyll and Bute Council is painting double yellow lines between the crossroads and School Brae.

Villagers are waiting on Argyll and Bute Council to carry out a traffic speed survey as the first step in reducing the speed limit on village roads (the B845) to 20mph.

Mull officer up for bravery award

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

A Bunessan police officer who tackled a knife-wielding man without back-up has been nominated for a bravery award.

Clare Chalmers is one of two officers from across Scotland who has been put forward for recognition from the Scottish Police Federation for courageously carrying out their duty single-handedly to keep the public safe in the most demanding of circumstances.

Even though the nearest help was an hour-and-a-half away, PC Chalmers faced down the violent man and got his female victim to safety.

The drama began with a call to a home in the south, and one of the remotest parts of the island.

When PC Chalmers arrived



PC Clare Chalmers on Mull is nominated for a bravery award. Photograph: Guy =

an eight-month jail sentence. Scottish Police Federation representative Karen Cameron said: 'Despite the very clear dangers and threats of harm, PC Chalmers used her tactical skills to neutralise the threat enough to recover the weapons and the female from within the house.'

'If she had not been so courageous the female could have been taken hostage, harmed further, perhaps seriously injured or worse.'

'PC Chalmers was aware of the danger the suspect posed and went alone to ensure the safety of the victim knowing any assistance was hours away.'

at the house she found a woman covered in blood who said she had been assaulted by a man in the property.

PC Chalmers tracked the man hiding under a duvet in another room and he brandished two knives at her.

Despite knowing back-up

was so far away, she used her skills to get the weapons off him.

With no tasers on the island, PC Chalmers had to use pepper spray on him.

A helicopter later arrived to arrest the man, who pleaded guilty and received

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Council meetings to be broadcast live

Four years after Argyll and Bute Council voted against a motion to live-stream all council meetings, despite a 1,100 signature petition, it is joining the list of Scottish bodies that share their sessions live on the internet.

Live-streaming allows electorates and councillors immediate access to council chambers without having to leave their homes and is carried out by many local authorities across Scotland.

As one petitioner wrote: 'If the great and good in Holyrood can be broadcast live, then shining the light on local democracy can only be a positive step forward in encouraging our youth to be political.'

In 2017, councillors voted along party lines to kick the plan to live-stream council meetings into the long grass and, instead, voted in favour of an amendment to carry out costings. The council had the equipment required, which it used for video conferencing, installed in 2013.

Now plans have been revealed for two key council committee meetings to be streamed live in December as an experiment, ahead of a full roll-out in 2022. Councillors won't return to the chamber for business until the new year.

The meetings of the policy and resources committee on Thursday December 9 and the audit and scrutiny committee five days later are set to be available to view live.

All councillors on those committees will join the meetings remotely, while the council is looking at starting 'hybrid' meetings in January.

These will see members able to join in the council chamber, or from home via Microsoft Teams software.

No council committee meetings have taken place in person since March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with business being conducted remotely.

The details are revealed in a report to go before the full council at its virtual meeting on Thursday November 25.

Housing shortage could deprive Mull of teachers

High school parents on Mull fear the island's housing shortage could deprive their children of teachers.

A number of school houses were sold off by Argyll and Bute Council but Tobermory still has two council-owned flats for teachers in the town.

One of them is occupied but the other at the council buildings on Breadalbane Street is empty and badly in need of repair.

Much to parents' growing frustrations with the council, the three-bedroom flat is still waiting for a survey to be carried out so a list of jobs can be drawn up to make it fit to live in.

A survey has still not been scheduled despite the urgent need to make the flat habitable, say worried parents.

One teacher desperately seeking accommodation even offered to move into the flat in its current state but the council said it would not work around her, one concerned parent told



Parents of pupils at Tobermory High School, left, fear the island's housing shortage could deprive their children of teachers.

housing for people on the island including key workers. Teachers who have moved to the island to take up posts will rarely have any family connections here so their options are extremely limited and a housing problem can quickly turn into a crisis.

'We would ask that the council does everything in its power to ensure that it supports staff with immediate accommodation needs. It is important that we also plan for the future so that situations such as these can be avoided.'

Argyll and Bute Council said: 'We are in the process of getting a survey carried out at the property concerned and will continue to liaise with the teacher regarding suitable properties on the island.'

'We don't have enough affordable housing, it's that simple. For a property to sit empty is just idiotic.'

The Oban Times, adding: 'I feel the council is totally out of touch with the difficulties we face on Mull with housing.'

'We don't have enough

affordable housing, it's that simple. For a property to sit empty is just idiotic.' A joint statement from Alasdair McCrone and Tracy Mayo, who co-chair Tobermory High School Parent Council, said: 'It is essential to the sustainability of island life that we continue to be able to attract and, importantly, retain teaching staff. The availability of housing is key to this.'

'We are both aware of the acute shortage of affordable

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OT

Health and safety probe after council depot drama

A health and safety investigation has started after an incident at Oban's £1.4m council depot.

Emergency services were called to the council yard at Millpark on Wednesday November 17 and set up a 200m exclusion zone after fears that flames coming from an oxyacetylene cylinder could blow a shed roof off.

Homes were evacuated until the area was made safe. Two appliances from Oban Fire Station were at the scene.

Argyll and Bute Council described it as a 'minor incident'.

The council spokesperson said: 'The fire service attended as a precaution and remained on site to cool down gas bottles with water. No-one was injured and there is no damage to the building. As is standard in incidents like this, we will now carry out a health and safety investigation.'

Last week's incident happened almost five years to the day that the old council depot site was destroyed by fire on November 11 2016.

Council considers constituency proposals

The UK Boundary Commission's proposals to make Argyll the second largest constituency in Scotland are being considered by Argyll and Bute Council today (Thursday November 25).

The Boundary Commission for Scotland has published its initial proposals for a new map of UK Parliamentary constituencies in 2023, in an eight-week public consultation, running until Wednesday December 8.

Two Scottish Members of Parliament stand to lose their jobs, as legislation cuts the number of Westminster seats in Scotland from 59 to 57 in 2023. Most of the current Ross, Skye and Lochaber constituencies, represented by the House of Commons' SNP leader Ian Blackford MP, will be replaced by a new Highland Central



constituencies, represented by the House of Commons' SNP leader Ian Blackford MP, will be replaced by a new Highland Central

The proposed new boundary for the Argyll and Bute constituency in 2023, shown by the pink border.

constituencies, which takes the Highland capital away from the current Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey constituency.

The Ross, Skye and Lochaber constituency's northern boundary retreats south from Lochinver to Strathcarron, lost to a new Highland North constituency covering the north of Scotland.

In return for its lost northern territory, the new Highland Central constituency spreads eastwards, subsuming all of

Loch Ness from Fort Augustus to Inverness, back down through the Monadhliath Mountains to Roybridge.

Meanwhile, the current Argyll and Bute constituency creeps northwards, taking away the peninsulas of Morvern and Ardnamurchan up to the A830, plus Glencoe, Duror and Onich, from Ross, Skye and Lochaber, with the Corran Ferry in between.

A report before Argyll and Bute Council explains: 'Under the proposals, the current Argyll and Bute Constituency boundary will be spread north to incorporate part of ward 21 including Ballachullish, Kinlochleven, Morvern,

Ardnamurchan, Moidart and Ardour. The new constituency will be called Argyll, will have 71,422 electors and cover an approximate area of 9,294 square kilometres. Geographically this is the second largest constituency in Scotland. In early 2022 the Commission will hold a secondary six-week consultation where comments received on the initial proposals will be published. The Commission will then consider all the evidence and revised proposals will be published for a four-week public consultation in 2022 with final recommendations being submitted to the Speaker by July 1 2023.'

Youngsters' Christmas activities cancelled again as a result of Covid

Schools in Argyll and Bute cannot host their usual Christmas dances, fayres and nativities again this year, due to the latest NHS advice on the Covid pandemic.

In a letter sent to parents and carers on Monday November 22, Argyll and Bute Council's executive director Douglas

Hendry said: 'The Education Service Covid Recovery Group has considered the current Scottish Government guidance to ensure we continue to put the wellbeing of our school communities and staff at the heart of all we do.'

'Given the current guidance, it is with regret that we are

writing to let you know that schools will not be holding Christmas dances and nativities again this year. Schools may continue to hold in class Christmas activities within their bubble. The question of outside performances, where parents were invited into school grounds to watch

these performances, was also considered. The current Scottish Government advice is for parents to drop off their children at a safe distance from schools to avoid mass parent gatherings in school grounds. Consequently, it would follow that parents should not be invited onto the school grounds

to watch outside school shows during the day. Parents/carers are permitted into school where it is essential and appropriately risk assessed. Whilst we understand this communication may be disappointing, these mitigations will continue to keep us all safe, well and learning.'



TRANSMISSION

IN-PERSON PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS CANCELLED

Following the notice in last week's Oban Times advertising SSEN Transmission Planning Advice Notice (PAN) Public Consultation Events for An Suidhe, Crarae, Craig Murrail and Crossaig North Substations and the proposed Sheirdrim Windfarm project on the 30th, 1st and 2nd of December, we have made the difficult decision to cancel these events in person due to Covid-19 levels currently affecting Argyll and Bute.

We are disappointed that we have had to cancel, however, our top priority is the safety of the residents of Inveraray, Carradale and Lochgilphead and our colleagues. We hope you understand that unfortunately there is no safe way to go ahead with these events in person at this time.

If you have any queries about joining the virtual consultation, or if you would like us to send you a paper copy of the consultation booklet, please contact the Community Liaison Manager:

Caitlin Quinn
07901135758
caitlin.quinn@asse.com
1 Waterloo St, Glasgow, G2 6AY

In order to provide an opportunity for you to share your views with us, we will be continuing as planned with our virtual consultation and providing an enhanced virtual offering. Live IM chats with the project team will be held on the following dates and times:

**Wednesday 8th December 2021:
10-12 Noon**

Thursday 9th December 2021: 5-7pm

You will find further information about the virtual consultation, the project & the planning applications, access to the virtual consultation room and the feedback forms via the project webpage:

www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/argyll-and-kintyre-275kv-substations/

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Chilli con carne and rice

On cold dark nights, try SW warming smoky beef chilli with tasty turmeric- and coriander-flavoured rice

- Syn FREE,
- Cooking time 55 mins
- Serves 4

Ingredients

- 500g lean beef mince (5% fat or less)
- 1 large onion & 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 large red peppers, deseeded and diced
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped
- 1 heaped tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tsp each of dried oregano, smoked paprika & ground cumin
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 400g can red kidney beans & 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- 300g dried long-grain rice
- 1 tsp ground turmeric

Method

1. Spray a large non-stick saucepan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a high heat. Add the beef and cook for 5 minutes, breaking up any lumps with a spoon, then drain off any fat.
2. Add the onion, peppers, garlic, chopped chilli, tomato purée, oregano, paprika, cumin and chilli powder to the pan, then reduce the heat to medium and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Add the beans, chopped tomatoes, stock cube and 300ml boiling water to the pan. Bring back to the boil over a high heat, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, put the rice and turmeric in a pan and cook according to the pack instructions.
5. Serve the chilli with your favourite Speed veg or salad.



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Council agrees to list wheelchair accessible vehicles

Proposals for a published list of wheelchair accessible taxis in Argyll and Bute have moved a step closer after councillors gave their backing to the idea.

Details of the plans went before the council's planning, protective services and licensing committee at its virtual meeting on Wednesday November 17.

Under the plans, drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) will be duty bound to carry a wheelchair user in their wheelchair at no additional charge or in a passenger seat if they choose to sit there. Failure to comply carries a fine of up to £1,000, under Section 165 of the 2010 Act. Executive director Douglas Hendry explained: 'Currently, if a wheelchair user feels they have been discriminated against, they would have to raise a civil court action against the driver. That is a lengthy and expensive process that puts many people off seeking legal redress for their rights being breached. Secondly, it allows wheelchair users to see what WAV availability there is in their area.'

Cruachan expansion public consultation

Dates announced for information sessions

Renewable power company Drax has announced dates for its next round of public consultation on plans to more than double the generating capacity of its 'Hollow Mountain' power station.

Under the plans, a second underground power station will be built adjacent to the existing one at Cruachan.

Around 900 jobs will be created and indirectly supported during the new power station's construction, providing a huge boost to communities around Loch Awe and across Argyll, says Drax. People will have the opportunity to learn more about the proposals during

two consultation exhibitions when members of the project team will answer questions and discuss the planning process, design stages, works programme, construction and operation of the Cruachan expansion.

The sessions will be at Dalmally Community Centre on Tuesday November 30 from 1.30pm to 7.30pm and at Taynuilt Village Hall on Wednesday December 1, also from 1.30pm to 7.30pm.

Steve Marshall, Drax's development manager, said: 'We are keen to hear from as many people as possible over the two days. Cruachan has

created and supported jobs in Argyll for more than 50 years and through our exciting expansion plans we will ensure the station remains at the heart of the community, as well as Scotland's energy system, for many decades to come.

'The recent COP26 climate conference in Glasgow underlined the need to invest in renewables to decarbonise our economy. In 2020, enough wind power to supply a million homes went to waste in the UK because there wasn't enough capacity to ensure this excess renewable power was stored and made available when it was needed. By expanding Cruachan we will help to stop that from happening by ensuring more renewable power is available to Scotland's homes and businesses, when they need it, reducing costs whilst



Renewable power company Drax is launching the next stage in its public consultation on its plans to more than double the generating capacity of Cruachan Power Station.

helping the planet.' There will be another exhibition early next year before Drax makes an application to the Scottish Government for consideration.

The submission is expected to be made in spring, with a decision from the government expected to be received in 2023. The project needs

financial stability support from the UK government to secure private investment in long-duration storage sites like at Cruachan. If that happens and the planning application is approved, work to build the second station at Cruachan could start in 2024 with the facility up and running in 2030.

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OT

Call for rent controls and more social housing

'Soaring' rents in Argyll require a system of rent controls, a Highlands and Islands MSP has said.

Private sector rental statistics released by the Scottish Government show 10 out of 18 areas in Scotland recorded an increase above UK inflation of 1.5 per cent between September 2020 and 2021.

Looking at two-bedroom homes, which make up 49 per cent of rental accommodation in Scotland, rents in Argyll and Bute rose 0.9 per cent. On average, rental prices rose by 0.6 per cent in the past year in Scotland and 23.5 per cent in the past decade.

Between 2010 and 2021, the average rent for a two-bedroom property in Argyll and Bute increased by 15.8 per cent. Over this longer term, average rents in Argyll and Bute rose by less than the rate of inflation across all property sizes.

Highlands and Islands MSP Ariane Burgess, the Scottish Greens housing spokesperson, said: 'Many constituents in Argyll and Bute, along with tenants across the country,

have faced eye-watering rent rises. We cannot leave something as fundamental as people's homes to market forces.

'It is astonishing rents continued to rise in the pandemic, when demand was low and people were struggling with reduced income. If landlords won't lower rents in these conditions, when will they?'

Green MSP and tenants' rights minister Patrick Harvie said: 'We have committed to tackling high rents by implementing a national system of rent controls by the end of 2025. We will provide people with more secure, stable, affordable tenancies with improved standards of accommodation.'

Alison Watson, director of Shelter Scotland, said: 'The housing system in Scotland is broken. We need to give hope to struggling families by building more social housing.'

In September, Argyll and Bute Council approved a new housing strategy to build more than 1,000 affordable homes over the next five years, including 343 in 2021/22.

Real-life emergency on Mull interrupts RNLI film

by Sandy Neil
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

Mull's lifeboat crew had just settled down in Tobermory on Sunday November 14 to watch a film celebrating the RNLI, titled Launch! On the Sea with Scotland's Lifeboats, when a real-life emergency launched them onto the sea in search of a missing diver.

At 3.50pm on Sunday November 14, just before the film was due to start in An Tobar, the volunteer crew's pagers all sounded, and they dashed to the RNLI station nearby in the harbour.

On the 25-minute passage down the Sound of Mull, the crew prepared to undertake casualty care of the diver if required. Shortly before arriving on scene, one nautical mile northwest of Fishnish Bay, communication was received



Tobermory RNLI responds to a mayday in the Sound of Mull.

that a local dive boat had found the diver safe and well, and returned him to his scallop dive boat. On arrival, it was clear that the scallop dive boat was aground on a submerged reef close to shore. The local dive boat had passed a line to the casualty vessel but was unable to take them off the rocks.

Tobermory lifeboat's coxswain made the decision that the best course of action was to tow the boat off the rocks as

she was listing significantly on an ebbing tide and in imminent danger of breaking up on the rocks.

With Oban lifeboat standing by, a bow tow was set up and with some careful manoeuvring, the casualty vessel towed into safer waters. After the crew of the scallop dive boat had checked for water ingress, the tow was dropped and they began to head for Lochaline.

Within a couple of minutes, the skipper communicated that they had lost engine power. With a tow re-established, the lifeboat towed the vessel to Lochaline where she was met by the Lochaline Coastguard Rescue Team and made secure on the pontoons.

The Elizabeth Fairlie Ramsey headed home to Tobermory where she was refuelled and made ready for service by 7.45pm.

Coxswain David McHaffie said: 'This was a very demanding call out that required quick actions and teamwork. I am glad that the Tobermory volunteers rose to the challenge, getting the boat and her three crew safely back to the pontoons. It was also a good example of working with the public as Gaelic Rose was first on scene and able to assist the diver.'



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Oban graduate to design new tartan

by Sandy Neil
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

'My grannies are so proud,' said Oban art graduate Sophie Anne Campbell, after she won a national competition to design a new tartan for rugs and runners.

Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and an innovative carpet mill, Alternative Flooring, joined forces in a project to celebrate British design, British-made, products and young talent, and to support the wool industry by championing wool as a 'wonder fibre' and sustainable textile.

The competition asked those studying woven textiles at GSA to design 'an extrapolation from the traditional tartan to the contemporary'. Eight entries were submitted during lockdown, in spring 2020.

The competition was won by 23-year-old Sophie Anne Campbell from Oban, who has just graduated from the GSA and is about to begin a Masters at Heriot-Watt School of Textiles and Design in the



Sophie Anne Campbell, winner, says: 'I wanted my own personality and creativity to shine through all my designs, even if I'm adhering to a quite strict design convention such as tartan.'

Scottish Borders.

The judges, who included Lorna Haigh from Alternative Flooring, Elaine Bremner, Woven Textiles tutor at the Glasgow School of Art, and Louise Gray, fashion designer and GSA graduate, all commended her lively, colourful and imaginative design.

'I come from a creative and musical family, and my interest in making and exploring different materials has always been encouraged,' she said. 'As a child I was always creating scrapbooks and filling sketchbooks with drawings.'

'When my father came home from his work offshore, I would show him my magazine, The Hillside Times (named af-

ter our house) filled with news and illustrations of what we'd all been up to.

'Being a Campbell and coming from the Highlands, tartan is a design I've grown up with. I've been living in Glasgow for four years and decided to use my surroundings as inspiration for the competition.'

'Because it was during lockdown, I couldn't get out much, so I walked around my neighbourhood (Great Western Road) as if I were a tourist, taking photos and looking at the city from a different perspective.'

'I made a note of geometric shapes, different textures and colours, and wove all those influences into my tartan design using six bright colours. I am quite a 'maximalist', so I found it natural to come up with a tartan which was cheerful and colourful with lots going on.'

Sophie was invited to the Alternative Flooring factory in Hampshire to see her design being created on the looms. She said: 'It's great to see my small digital design brought to

life on such an industrial large scale. It's refreshing to see such an ancient technique as weave transforming woollen thread into a modern-day tartan which I designed.'

Sophie's winning design will be produced by UK mills as limited-edition carpet and fabric.

'Being a Highlander, there's a lot of tartan to be seen in homes, that I know. You can see tartan carpet in some of the old hotels in Oban. It's a very traditional look but it can be quite dark. I enjoyed bringing brighter colours and a more contemporary look to my own tartan design.'

'Wool is sustainable, and it works in a circular economy. Both my grannies are great knitters. My grannies are so proud to hear that I'm working with wool to create a new tartan.'

YOURSTORY

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OT

LORN HEALTHY OPTIONS HEALTH TIP

The nervous system and its response to pain

Our nervous system consists of the brain, spinal chord and a complex network of nerves which allow us to send signals to and from other cells, glands and muscles all over our body.

The body receives and interprets input from our environment through various receptors before it responds in a way to ensure survival. Signals are constantly competing with each other creating an ever-changing chemical cocktail. The nervous system receptors connect to your brain to form your senses such as taste, hearing, vision, smell and touch.

These receptors have no ability to 'feel' they merely send signals to the brain which interprets them. Therefore when you feel something hot the feeling of heat is not in your hand, it's in your brain. This is an important factor when we consider the effects of long-term pain perception.

Receptors send billions of impulses per second to our



central nervous system (brain and spinal chord) and they are interpreted as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. The body reacts to pleasure with reward chemicals which make us feel content, relaxed, happy and excited.

Unpleasant signals like pain cause a release of stress chemicals such as adrenaline and cortisol which signal danger and make us feel anxious. This is how we have evolved as a survival strategy and is designed to be a short-term reaction. High levels of sustained anxiety are intolerable and very dangerous to anyone regardless

of how well you think you cope with difficult situations. Consider a time when you had a heated argument with a loved one or colleague and felt quite sick afterwards with stomach ache. Adrenaline reduces blood supply to the stomach and so you feel pain even though you have no problems with your digestive tract.

Therefore you do not require a physical structural problem, disease or infection to feel pain. Furthermore the release of stress chemicals will undoubtedly make pre-existing pain worse and old underlying pain circuits can

be reignited without a structural change or new injury. Those suffering with chronic pain often hear the quote that perhaps it's in their head? Well, yes, it may well be but that doesn't mean that the perception is not one hundred per cent real and visceral for those suffering.

Calming the nervous system and trying to separate ourselves from the causes of stress and anxiety should be our first port of call when it comes to dealing with long term pain and this is something we will discuss in the weeks to come.

For the full message go to the free resource section on the lornhealthyoptions.co.uk website.

Rob Graham,
Lead Exercise Professional,
Healthy Options.

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Distillery pl

Plans to build new whisky maturation warehouses on Islay have been approved by Argyll and Bute Council after a plea from a councillor not to treat the island like 'Craggy Island'.

Concerns were raised by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency over the proposal for the island's Ardnahoe Distillery.

Those objections were later withdrawn before the proposals went before the council's planning, protective services and licensing committee on November 17.

At that meeting Councillor Jean Moffat, Independent, Isle of Bute, expressed concern at the amount of extra traffic on Islay resulting from the expansion of the island's world-famous whisky industry.

But Councillor Alastair Redman, Kintyre and the Islands, who lives on Islay pushed for the plans to be approved. He asked the committee not to think of Islay like 'Craggy Island', in a reference to the fictional setting of the popular 1990s Channel 4

'Islay is not 'Craggy Island'. A growth in our industry is not something unusual and is merely returning to normal in, my opinion,' - Councillor Alastair Redman.



Councillor Alastair Redman.

sitcom Father Ted. Councillor Redman also drew an analogy with an episode of another

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CITY PLUMBING

Plans get backing

sitcom, the BBC series Yes Minister, during discussion of the distillery's plans.

Councillor Moffat said: 'What we do not know is how many employees would be employed here. As far as I know, on Islay they are constantly asking for more workers, and if you are going to have more employees, you have to put in some kind of infrastructure.'

Council planning officer Peter Bain replied: 'The existing distillery has 25 employees, and it is proposed the new facility will have six new jobs.'

Councillor Moffat then said: 'There is the road around that, but there is also going to be increased traffic, both on ferries and on the roads, if they bring in whiskies from other distilleries.'

'I know that Bute, and other islands and rural areas, would bite your hand off for anyone putting a case like this forward.'

'I find it sad that I am going to have to approve this because it does not go against planning.'

Councillor Redman said: 'With the greatest of respect,



Plans to build new warehouses at Ardnahe Distillery have been approved.

I am often reminded of the episode of Yes Minister where they are visiting 'the best hospital in the country' because it doesn't have any patients.

'Here we are blaming the condition of the roads on the vehicles using them, and are putting the cart before the horse.'

'I am a resident of Islay, and speak to a great number of young men and women. It is not just a case of filling jobs, it is the quality of employment and choice of jobs as companies bid for employees.'

Councillor Rory Colville, Liberal Democrat, South Kintyre, also welcomed the plans, saying: 'This is a private investment and people are putting a lot of money into it. They

are not going to get a huge investment for years as whisky has to be matured. I think this needs to be welcomed with open arms. I am absolutely delighted people have the confidence to bring this to the area.'

Councillor Redman added: 'My island is famous for its distilleries. You can stand and see warehouses that are huge. The notion these buildings are not in setting with Islay is nonsense. Islay is not Craggy Island - it is an industrial island. A growth in our industry is not something unusual and is merely returning to normality in my opinion.'

The plans were approved without an amendment being moved.

Ross of Mull fears missing out on broadband boost

Homes in Port Ellen, Garelochhead, Rhu and Tarbert are to get a major broadband boost as part of a £95m investment by Openreach - the nation's largest digital network provider used by customers of service providers including BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Vodafone.

The island communities of Rothesay on Bute and Whiting Bay on Arran will also be upgraded with the 'new, ultrafast, ultra-reliable' full fibre broadband network.

However, residents on the Ross of Mull are concerned they will miss out and have called a meeting with Scottish Government representatives.

In its announcement, Openreach says it has reached 'more than six million homes and businesses across the UK with ultrafast full fibre, around 480,000 of them in Scotland. The company has previously announced plans to upgrade eight Argyll towns, including Oban, Helensburgh

and Campbeltown'. Robert Thorburn, partnership director for Openreach in Scotland, said: 'Good connectivity is vital - whether it's to work from home, access education and care services, or for gaming and streaming entertainment - and that's why we're investing across the UK to upgrade our network.'

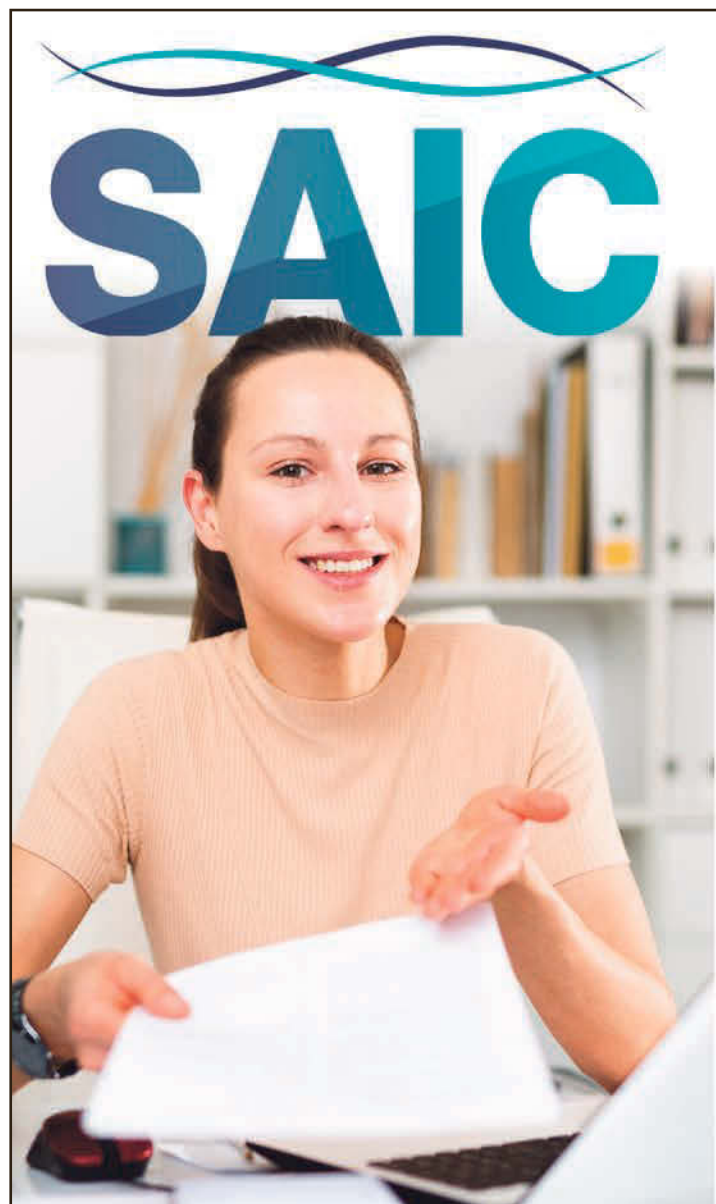
Scottish Government economy secretary Kate Forbes MSP said: 'Our Reaching 100 per cent (R100) programme - including our investment of £600 million in the R100 contracts - ensures that everyone in Scotland can access superfast broadband.'

'With Openreach's latest commercial investment of £95 million, this will ensure more than 50 of our communities across Scotland will be able to access even faster full-fibre broadband.'

However, residents on the Ross of Mull fear they will miss out on full fibre connection as part of R100. As a

result, a meeting was due to have been held at Pennyghael Community Centre on Monday November 22, when Scottish Government representatives 'will explain what the R100 contract will provide in terms of 'Superfast Access For All'', according to a post by Mull and Iona Community Trust.

The trust's general manager Moray Finch said: 'The meeting was arranged in response to a lobbying campaign specifically about properties on the Ross of Mull which were not destined to be connected to a full fibre connection as part of R100. A Mull resident replied: 'Our area has been told we will be connected by the end of 2023. Not good enough really when the cable network already exists. The disparity between Salen achieving speeds of 73mb and Fishnish consistently getting less than 1mb is completely unjustifiable and I'd be keen to understand Openreach's excuse for this.'



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OT

LETTERS

Carry on

The late, great Jurach George Orwell is quoted saying: 'Journalism is printing what someone else does not want published; everything else is public relations.'

News causes trouble, rocks the boat, kicks the tyres. That's the job. We're all under stress like never before, at least in the lifetimes of those young enough, and lucky enough, not to have lived through the Second World War. We remembered the Fallen on November 11, Armistice Day.

Now people, and our systems, are being tested by this covid pandemic, often to breaking point and beyond. In the words of Ian MacLaren, a Free Church of Scotland minister in Glasgow: 'Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.' That understanding must underpin our actions. There is a war memorial at a school, dedicated to the suffering of those who fought through both world wars. It depicts one such stricken soldier, lying near death in the mud, his arm outstretched and mouth open, imploring to the sky. The plinth below said simply: 'Carry on.' His message was clear: no matter how bad it gets, keep going. Things will improve.

This week we've carried stories that will cause someone, somewhere, trouble, in these most trying times. We must all carry on.

The editor welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.

However we reserve the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime phone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Please email: editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

The views expressed on our letters page are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of The Oban Times.

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Thank you

A big thank you to Argyll Community Housing Association and all the staff at Dunmar Court, Oban, for the kindness and hospitality they showed me last Wednesday, which I will not forget.

I was one of the residents evacuated from the houses near Millpark because of the fire incident at the council yard.

Stephen Jones, Oban.

Argyll earthquake

I write about the Achnamara earth tremor of November 16.

The British Geological Survey maintain a series of earthquake monitoring stations around Britain, the only one in Argyll being in Lochavich. Seismograph readings are transmitted by satellite to Edinburgh for analysis and real time seismograms can be viewed at www.earthquakes.bgs.ac.uk/helicorder/heli.html

The seismogram for the Achnamara tremor on Tuesday November 16 can be viewed by following the link, selecting LAWE under station, then 'short period' and the date. It occurred at a depth of 12 kilometres and was of 3.3 magnitude on the Richter scale.

For comparison, the 7.9 Richter earthquake in Haiti on August 14 this year can be found under LAWE, 'very long period' and the date.

Tony Dalton, Lochavich, By Tainuilt.

False premise

I see that the second homes controversy is raising its head yet again, but those who advocate restrictions on selling to people for second homes are basing their argument on the false premise that we should be encouraging young people to stay in the area. We should not.

Instead we should be encouraging them to take full advantage of a Scottish education, once the best in the world but now sadly declining under SNP 'management', to get universally recognised qualifications and take that expertise out into the wide world and use it for the benefit of everyone.

When they have made their mark, or their fortunes, or both, then is the time to return to their birthplace and apply their new found wealth for the benefit of those less fortunate. And one of the best ways to do this is by building houses and second homes. Remember a second home is only a camper van without wheels but it does contribute much larger

sums in terms of taxation and needs constant attention by way of upkeep, repair and garden maintenance, all of which provide good local employment. No home is affordable without a job and rather than vilify second home owners we should be thankful they chose Scotland rather than somewhere else in the world.

Andrew Green, Ardtoe.

Achnacloich Bridge

Following Mr Ross's statement and Mr Wheeler's letter to The Oban Times regarding the road markings at Achnacloich Bridge, I too have looked up the relevant section of the Traffic Signs Manual and it is clear to me these new road markings do not comply.

I attach the relevant drawing from the manual together with a rather revealing photograph of the road markings from BEAR's website. The difference is obvious.

Ironically, the position of the car in BEAR's own photograph shows perfectly why these road markings can be so dangerous.

Only last Saturday, I needed to make an emergency stop at the bridge because a car heading towards me suddenly put on its indicator and swerved into the marked centre lane.

Although the incredible number of signs, flashing lights and road markings at the bridge is already distracting, perhaps there should also be further signs advising non-HGVs to keep left. Or better still, revert to the pre-stupidity markings and signs which worked pretty well for 140 years.

G G MacDonald, by Dalmally.

Argyll earthquake

The spin doctors say that a new global deal has been achieved at COP26 in Glasgow.

The truth is different. Coal will only be 'phased down' not 'phased out'.

However Nicola Sturgeon managed to grab the headlines and squander another £12 million of taxpayers' money on top of the £24 million already squandered on developing nations.

The UK's share of the \$100 billion a year promised to developing nations includes Scotland, but Ms Sturgeon has to grandstand and add £36 million. Meanwhile in Scotland deprived areas, the NHS, local authorities and those in fuel poverty suffer.

Clark Cross, Linlithgow.

Freezing trains

Here we go again with a winter of freezing trains on the West Highland line.

YOUR PICTURE



Oban reader Linda Thomson sent us this stunning photo to share with our readers, please send it as a jpeg by email to editor@obantimes.co.uk

Is it so difficult to have these trains heated? What's the problem?

If the heaters are knackered, fix them. Fare paying passengers, old and very young, have had to put up with this problem every winter for years and it is not on.

The onboard staff must be sick of telling passengers to go into the next coach as its a bit warmer.

I would like to see a senior member of ScotRail speak to the Lochaber Times/The Oban Times and tell suffering passengers why their trains are like ice boxes.

Or is the day coming when boarding passengers will be issued with hot water bottles to keep them warm?

Joe Wilson, Spean Bridge.



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RES



Photograph of Connel Bridge taken from Bonawe Road. If you have a photograph that you would like to share, please email - no more than 2MB - to editor@obantimes.co.uk

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



'S gann a chreideas mi cho luath 's a tha mi a' faireachadh an ùine a' dol seachad, agus mun àm a bhios an colbh seo ga fhoillseachadh cha bhi ach ceithir seachdainean gu latha na Nollaige agus othail thiodhlacan is ròicean bidh!

Nach bu mhath gur ann mar sin a bhiodh cùisean dha na h-uile, ach chan ann, agus tha e brònach smaoinichadh air na bheil troimhe chèile feadh an t-saoghail nuair a tha sinn a' teannadh air ràith subhachais! Air crìochan na Pòlainn tha mìltean air an glacadh eadar 'clach' chruaidh Bhearus fo smachd an-ìochdmhor Alexander Grigoryevich Lukashenko, agus 'sgrath' arm na Pòlainn is saighdearan a' dìon crìochan na dùthcha. Tha bliadhnaichean bho thòisich na mìltean de dh'fhògarraich a' dèanamh slighe fhada chun nartach bho chaochladh dhùthchannan an ear, is iad a' sireadh sìth, cosnadh, agus beatha ùr air an taobh an iar. Gun teagamh tha cuid a' teicheadh bho gheur-leanmhainn agus ana-ceartas, tha feadhainn eile dìreach a' lorg barrachd saidhbheireis eaconamach, agus 's neònach mur eil cuid a dh'eucorach nam measg cuideachd. Ach 's coma dè thug an taobh seo iad tha e doirbh dha neach ceart sam bith gun cho-fhaireachadh a bhith aige nuair a chì e na truaghain sin is iad fliuch, fuar, agus acrach, agus tric ann an cunnart am beatha a' feuchainn tarsainn a' Chaolais Shasannaich ann an sgollag de bhàta rubair neo plastaig. Aig an aon àm tha e doirbh cuideachd gun suim a ghabhail ann am misneachd agus dìongmhaltas nan daoine sin, cuid aca a' siubhal le clann òga, is

iad a' lorg 'Tir a' Gheallaidh' aca!

Ach chan e sin a tha ron a' mhòr-chuid aca san Roinn Eòrpa idir, agus fiù 's dhan fheadhainn a gheibh tèarmann ann an dùthaich air choreigin tha dùbhlain cosnaidh, teachd-an-tir, agus dachaigh a' feitheamh, gun iomradh air cunnart a' bhiorais Covid 19 a tha a-rithist a' sgapadh mar fhalaig feadh cuid de dhùthchannan na h-Eòrpa. An dèidh na tha a' mhòr-ghalair seo air a dhèanamh de sgrìos feadh an t-saoghail mar-thà tha e da-rìribh doirbh a thuigsinn carson a tha mìltean de shluagh a' togail fianais agus ri eucoir an aghaidh bhanachdachaichean a tha a-nise dearbhte mar bhacadh is tilleadh air a' bhioras. Saoilidh mi gum bi mòran a' faireachadh mì-chofhurtail mu riaghailtean a tha a' sparradh banachdach, ach 's e firinn na cùise gum bheil mòran de shluagh an t-saoghail mar-thà air a dhion le banachdachaichean ghalaran mharbhtach eile a tha ga chur orra gun fhaighneachd. Theagamh gur e dìreach leisgeul a th' ann dha cuid ùpraid agus cron a dhèanamh, agus abair eadar-dhealachadh bhon fheadhainn a thug na milleanan not seachad air an t-seachdain seo chaidh a-rithist airson a' charthannais Clann ann an Èis aig a' BhBC. Chan eil teagamh nach e deagh theisteanas a tha seo air fialaidheachd sluagh Bhreatann, fiù 's is cuid de na saighdearan againn a' cuideachadh le togail challaidean air crìochan na Pòlainn gus clann agus eile a chumail a-mach às an Roinn-Eòrpa!

Allan Campbell, ailean@obantimes.co.uk

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

The climate conference in Glasgow was billed as the biggest, but quickly lost media headlines. It was trumpeted as the most inclusive – but non-governmental organisations, activists, indigenous groups lacked access to power. It was presented as our last chance – but its agreements are tame and any nation can ignore them.

Before, many young people were in despair, facing a life of pandemics, extreme weather, shortages, vast movements of people. It's not only us – wild animals, insects, trees and plants all suffer.

How do we break patterns of consumerism, of taking more than the Earth can sustain?

How can we be our brother's keeper when we close the gates of Europe against the desperate, persecuted, hopeless, as climate change causes war, drought, famine?

At the end of the final book of the Bible we hear of the 'new Jerusalem', where beside a clear river grows the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Peace can come and the earth can heal us. God's plan is for the good of all.

The Book of Revelation is anything but peaceful, full of storminess, destruction and suffering. Nor is the gift of healing the nations cheap, though it is free. The scriptures call us to

be co-workers in the healing, aware of the needs and rights of our fellow human beings.

Many of us make small sacrifices and cut back on what we own, eat, wear, waste, loving our neighbour by practical action, and I believe prayer magnifies the effect. By setting ourselves aside, we become fully ourselves in permitting God to take us out of egocentricity to become more fully ourselves, letting our true inner core to shine through.

Christians are called to action too, hence so many were present, singing, protesting, debating, urging at COP26. One practical act is not to buy more than we need; nor from companies,

especially the ones with international power, unless we are satisfied they respect the planet in production, transport and recycling and in their morals over staff treatment, from producing raw materials to doorstep deliveries.

Commitment to prayer, to protest wrongdoing, to practical service, to healing are present at the heart of Christian faith.

Whenever we give the natural world a chance to recoup, to regenerate, it is astonishing how fast it does so. It is as if nature is on our side, hoping to heal us and our nations.

Rosemary Power is a writer and a retired church professional.

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OT

DISTRICT NEWS



Georgina Agg of Ardchattan, a winner of the Heart of Argyll Wildlife and Kilmartin Museum's Treasure Hunt Trail competition, with her chosen prize: a drawing of a baby goat.

There's no kidding around for these eagle-eyed winners

There's no kidding about with these eagle-eyed competition winners. The Hazel and Agg families took part in Heart of Argyll Wildlife and Kilmartin Museum's Treasure Hunt Trail competition, a self-guided tour which invited participants to take photographs of specific points of interest in the area. After being picked as joint winners of the competition, Georgina Agg of Ardchattan, and Thomas and Emily Hazel of Macclesfield, were rewarded with two lovingly-created and detailed illustrations of their favourite animals, drawn by Heart of Argyll organisation's talented Oly Hemmings. Georgina opted for a baby goat and was surprised to learn that it was Oly's first-ever drawing of a goat, noting how life-like it was. Thomas and Emily chose a sea-eagle, and described the drawing as 'beautifully drawn', and reminding them of the sea eagle they saw perched on a rock during a boat trip to Oban. Anna Hazel, Thomas and Emily's mother, was full of praise for the competition and for the area: 'We have had a great week in Argyll, staying with family and working our way through the treasure trail as a family. We particularly enjoyed visiting the beach

at Carsaig, where the children loved finding interesting shells and pebbles as well as clambering over the rocks and spotting little creatures. Being chosen as winners was an added bonus!' Emma Agg, Georgina's mother, was similarly pleased with their experience: 'We really recommend it for a family day, being outside enjoying the fresh air is good for well-being as well as learning new things too!' The self-guided tour is still open and available for those interested in taking part, and can be accessed by visiting www.kilmartin.org/self-guided-trail.

Kilmore SWI

Kilmore SWI met on Wednesday November 10 in Kilmore where members were welcomed by the President Mrs Fiona Dickie.

The hands-on demonstration was led by the president where all members took part in making wax wraps from a fat quarter and beeswax and they were all happy with the end results.

The next meeting is Wednesday December 8 in the hall. This will be a Christmas-themed night and all are welcome.

Kilmore 100

The winner for October was S Quillan and December winner was Duncan Mudie.



The Reverend Beki Cansdale at St John's Cathedral encouraging people to write messages of hope to create a Hope Tent as part of a week of displays marking COP26 and beyond

KG_T48_
BeckiCansdale

Action stations at Cathedral

St John's Cathedral invited people to think, chat and be inspired in response to COP26 and beyond, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Community groups got together to put on a series of displays at stations throughout the Cathedral in George Street last week to get people talking about their disappointments and hopes from COP26 as well as thinking about what action they could take to make positive changes.

Hope Kitchen, the GRAB Trust, Keep Oban Beautiful and Oban Youth Cafe were just some of the groups taking part.

It was the idea of cathedral curate the Reverend Beki Cansdale who said: 'We wanted to engage people and give them a space to come together to talk and share their feeling and ideas after COP26 and importantly to spark off ideas on how we can all take action to make positive changes. COP26 might be over but it doesn't stop there. We



need to get together and take action to make positive changes happen in our communities. Hopefully our event will help.

'It was great to get so many groups helping us with the displays and to see so many people come and join us,' added the Rev Cansdale.

Today, Thursday November 25, is your last chance to go and view the displays.

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Dram fine support for air ambulance lifeline service

by Sandy Neil
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) is raising a toast to two of the most respected names in the world of whisky after receiving a £20,000+ donation to support its crucial lifeline to the country's islands.

Master Distiller Jim McEwan and Dramfool staged a series of special events to mark Jim's retreat after a lifetime in the whisky industry.

Living on Islay, Jim and his family know first-hand the value of air ambulance support for island and outlying communities and he had no hesitation in naming SCAA to receive funds raised during his swan-song sell-out events.

A virtual Masterclass tasting and a special single cask bottling were among the events which attracted support from whisky enthusiasts throughout the world.

Dramfool's Bruce Farquhar explained that the support from Jim's army of fans was 'overwhelming', with global interest particularly piqued by the single cask bottling of Jim's beloved Bruichladdich from his personal collection, released to celebrate his contribution to the whisky industry.

'We were absolutely blown away by the interest and support we received for the online event and the special bottling,' he said. 'Having more than 260 people over at least eight time zones and 12 countries tune in for tasting was amazing.'

'Then to sell 314 bottles of the celebration Bruichladdich in just seven minutes was beyond all expectations - among the fastest sell-outs of any release we've ever had.'

'It is this enthusiasm and affection for Jim McEwan, Islay and the work of Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance that resulted in such outstanding support from our clients.'

As Jim joined Bruce Farquhar and Colin Fraser from Dramfool to present a cheque for £20,549 to SCAA, he expressed his pleasure at



Islay-based SCAA volunteer Katherine Urquhart accepts the cheque from (from left) Bruce Farquhar, Jim McEwan and Colin Fraser.

being able to support a charity close to his heart.

'I've worked in Scotland's greatest industry all my days and now, as I hand over to the next generation, it seems appropriate to give something back to a charity that has proved a lifesaver to the people of Islay and other remote communities across Scotland,' said Jim.

'Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance is funded solely from public donations and it's crucial that we all try to help fund its life-saving flights. Everyone who supported our special events is helping to keep these guys in the air.'

Nick Harvey, director of fundraising and

communications at SCAA, said the support shown by Jim and Dramfool would help save lives.

'SCAA is a regular visitor to islands such as Islay and Jura to tend and airlift those seriously ill or injured,' he said. 'Our pre-hospital care and speed in getting patients to mainland care can literally prove a lifesaver.'

'We're extremely grateful to both Jim and Dramfool - and the many hundreds who supported the events - for recognising the value of SCAA's life-saving service. Our thanks to everyone concerned.'

At random

MARTIN LAING

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Clean and green

So COP26 is over and a cobbled-together statement was finally agreed, albeit with some disappointment voiced by a number of nations.

At the same time, protests continue by Insulate Britain members, stopping traffic by gluing themselves to roads, with a number of activists subsequently jailed for their actions.

The issue of climate change and renewable energy remains at the top of news agendas, with much attention in recent days on power generation and the best way to produce green energy in future.

Why, then, do the powers that be not look to Argyll and in particular the Cruachan power station near Lochawe?

The Hollow Mountain was visited, as reported in The Oban Times, of course, by former Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull, while he was in Scotland as part of the COP26 convention.

Cruachan - an amazing feat of engineering by any standards or timescale and well worth a visit - opened in the mid 1960s after construction began in 1959. And ever since, Cruachan has been producing clean, green energy that is endlessly renewable.

The great and the good who are tasked with plotting our future should cast their eyes to Cruachan if they want a solution.

Editor's note - see page 11.

Behave yourselves

I was more than a little disappointed to read of the abuse and anger being targeted at CalMac staff by some passengers.

In my experience - and I have travelled on CalMac vessels many times - the staff have been excellent. They are polite, courteous and professional and go out of their way to be helpful.

The Covid pandemic and its impacts are not their fault and neither are the cancellations of services or shortage of ships.

People do not deserve to be abused while carrying out their jobs, in public service or any other field of work. If you have a complaint about CalMac, write to your local politicians. Treat the staff with respect and decency. It is the least they should be able to expect.

What do you think?

Send your comments to editor@obantimes.co.uk.

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Decision day for the future management of Oban Bay

Expectation is mounting as a special meeting of the Argyll and Bute Harbour Board draws near.

As regular readers of the Oban Times will be aware, on the 2nd December the Harbour Board will consider a range of options for the future management of Oban Bay. Stakeholders hope that this will finally result in a green-light for the establishment of a Trust Port for Oban.

The need for a new Harbour Authority for Oban was first identified by Argyll and Bute Council back in 2003.

Since then numerous studies and reports have been completed but, other than the introduction of a voluntary Code of Practice for users of the Harbour by the Oban Bay Management Group (OBMG), there has been little to show for these endeavours until recently.

The Oban Bay Management Group consists of representatives from:

- Argyll and Bute Council
- CalMac Ferries Ltd
- CMAL
- Northern Lighthouse Board
- Oban Bay Stakeholders Group
- Oban Community Harbour Development Association
- Transport Scotland

Existing Harbour management

At present only very limited areas of water are actively managed in Oban Bay. Argyll and Bute Council manage the waters immediately adjacent to the North Pier, whilst CalMac, on behalf of CMAL, manage those just off the Railway Pier. The Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) manages the waters off their pier, but has no statutory powers to do so.

Although historic legislation exists and is still valid, the remainder of the Harbour, including the waters off the South Pier, is neither managed nor regulated.

Navigational Risk Assessments have consistently demonstrated that the most significant risk is of a small vessel coming into conflict

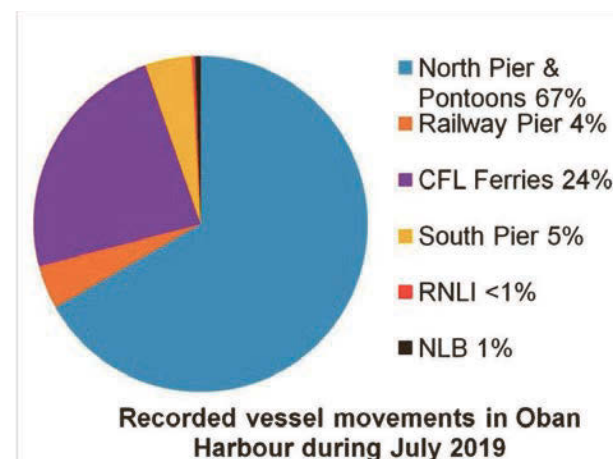
with a larger commercial vessel such as a ferry at the North Entrance. A voluntary code of practice (e.g. marked channel for small craft, radio warnings by large vessels and voluntary speed limits) has been developed with Stakeholders for the remainder of Oban Bay and its Approaches. However this has no legal standing and cannot be enforced.

Recent changes in Harbour use

For the past two years the Oban Community Harbour Development Association (OCHDA) has been working on a proposal to create a Trust Port that will manage the waters of Oban Bay and its Approaches. Their work has demonstrated that the need for management of the vessels within the Harbour is now even more pressing than ever as a direct consequence of recent changes in the quantity and type of vessels visiting Oban.

An appraisal of potential options for the management of the Harbour was first completed in 2014, at which time there were just 9,400 reported vessel movements within Oban Bay, more than 80% of which were ferries operated by CalMac. Less than 700 vessels visited the North Pier in the same period. Consequently, it was recommended that the Harbour should be managed from the Railway Pier by CMAL. This proposal was rejected by Stakeholders in 2018, at which time Argyll and Bute Officers also stated that the Council was not equipped to run or manage a harbour with so many vessel movements and that a Trust Port was considered to be a better option.

A more recent review completed by OCHDA found that by 2019 there had been a three-fold increase in vessel movements and a significant



change in their pattern. These changes are due to both the installation of the North Pier Pontoons and an increase in commercial vessels using the Harbour. More than 32,000 vessel movements were recorded during the year, the majority moving to and from the North Pier. In the peak summer months more than two thirds of vessel movements were associated with the North Pier. This further supports the view that a Trust Port based at the North Pier is the safest option for Oban. It will provide a single point of contact for all Harbour users, particularly those who may be making their first visit.

The Trust Port proposal

OCHDA has been working with the Council since 2019 to develop the option of a Trust Port based at the North Pier. Their analysis has shown that the benefits which accrue from the establishment of a Trust Port clearly make it the best option for Oban.

If the Argyll and Bute Harbour Board support the proposal to establish a Trust Port, the responsibilities and the regulatory powers held by the Council will be transferred to the new Harbour Authority. This will be accompanied by the maritime facilities which are currently operated by the Council being leased to the new Harbour Authority on a commercial basis, with the Council retaining ownership of these assets.

In order to create a new Harbour Authority, as well as providing the legislative basis for the control of the waters within the Harbour, it is necessary to submit a Harbour Revision Order (HRO) to Scottish Government Ministers. A preliminary draft has already been completed by OCHDA and their legal advisors. Once the HRO

has been approved it will enter into Statute and the new Harbour Authority will come into existence.

Like all Trust Ports the new Harbour Authority will

be managed by a Trust Port Board. It is proposed that the Oban Harbour Board will have a total of eight appropriately experienced and qualified members. The Harbour

Why is a Trust Port based at the North Pier the best option for Oban?

Safety A single point of contact at the busiest destination in the Harbour offers the safest solution for all harbour users

Represent the interests of all harbour users Trust Ports are the only type of Statutory Harbour Authority which are directly accountable to their Stakeholders

Independent governance Trust Ports are free from interference from outside interests, allowing the Harbour Board to concentrate fully on the task in hand

Economic benefits for all Adopting the proposed operational model will bring about significant economic benefits for all Stakeholders

Additional employment In addition to protecting existing jobs, the Trust Port is expected to create additional full time and part time posts

'Sole focus' A Trust Port's primary responsibility is the operation, management and further development of a successful Harbour that is safe for all, now and in the future.

Future planning and investment As other Trust Ports have demonstrated, through stable and effective governance Trust Ports are best placed to develop strategic long-term investment and development plans for the harbour they manage

Timescale OCHDA has already completed the majority of the preparatory work that is needed to bring about the implementation of the new Harbour Authority, and is ready to commence additional fund raising once the Harbour Board have made their decision.



Board will be completely independent, will report to the Scottish Government and will be accountable to the Harbour Stakeholders (all those who have an interest in the Harbour now and for future generations).

It is anticipated that in addition to the Board Members the new Harbour Authority will create additional full and part-time jobs, and that the additional staff will work alongside existing staff to manage the Harbour on a day to day basis.

The area of water to be included in the Trust Port was the subject of a public consultation that was carried out by OCHDA last winter. There was broad agreement that the northern limit will be an arc approximately 3/4 mile radius seaward of the Northern Entrance, including the two large-ship anchorages outside the Bay, whilst the southern limit will extend across the southern entrance to the Sound of Kerrera. The waters of Ardantrive Bay and Oban Marina will be excluded from the Harbour area, as will a 'maintenance strip' off the

"Oban is heavily dependent on a safe and efficient harbour for all. This can only be properly secured under the Trust Port option that OCHDA is proposing. It is clear to us that the rising increase in traffic and the shifting pattern of use and demands on the Harbour are increasingly out of balance with the existing management of the Harbour. It is therefore essential that the Harbour Board are co-operative in facilitating and supporting the proposal to enable the creation of a new Trust Port for Oban."

Oban Community Council

NLB Pier. The CMAL Statutory Harbour Area will remain in place, nested inside the Trust Port - an arrangement which exists elsewhere on the west coast.

Financial considerations

Trust Ports have to be self-funding and sustainable. The new Harbour Authority will generate its income from two principal sources: the existing North Pier and Pontoon facility, where it is proposed that charges will continue to be levied on the same basis as current arrangements, and a Conservancy Fee

The Conservancy Fee is levied on ALL vessels above a specific size which use the Harbour, including those which pass through it such as the CalMac ferries. The fee is based on the costs which relate solely to maintaining and conserving specific aspects of harbour operations such as the management of vessel movements, dredging and surveying.

At present the North Pier and Pontoon facility struggles to break even in a typical year. However, by combining the North Pier and Conservancy functions it is possible for the Trust Port to make considerable savings on expenditure, thereby creating a profitable enterprise which will also generate additional income for Argyll and Bute Council.

The Trust Port will be obliged to reinvest any surplus back into the Harbour, Oban and its local community. There is no dividend for shareholders, nor is it possible to spend any surplus anywhere else than the Harbour and local community.

Future opportunities

Whilst all Stakeholders agree that safety is the single issue which requires the formation of a new Harbour Authority, it is perhaps the longer term eco-



nomie benefits to the Harbour, Oban, the Council and the wider economy of Argyll and the Islands which offer the greatest potential. There are numerous examples of Trust Ports elsewhere in Scotland which have transformed not only the harbour but also the town in which they are based - Mallaig, Ullapool, Stornoway and Scrabster are but a few examples.

Through being managed by a Board whose focus is solely that of the Trust Port for which they are responsible, these ports and harbours have all managed to attract significant investment from a variety of sources and, working in collaboration with their local Councils and the Scottish Government, have improved their harbours for the benefit of all Stakeholders.

Mallaig Harbour Authority (MHA) was established as a Trust Port in 1968. The inefficient layout of the harbour hampered movement of goods to/from the quayside. MHA's Board, working with Highland Council, HIE and other partners, has successfully attracted financial support and partnership working in a way it believes a government sponsored body would not. Improvements have included upgrading and building new piers and docks and surrounding service areas, the provision of secure car parking and a 50-berth marina for leisure craft.

Oban faces similar challenges to those of Mallaig. The Trust Port offers the most viable means by which the full potential of the Harbour can be realised for all users ranging from kayakers and paddle-boarders to visiting cruise ships and commercial operators. Opportunities such as the anticipated growth in offshore energy and the proposed expansion at Cruachan mean that action is needed sooner rather than later.

"The Harbour is the heart of Oban – it's why Oban is here! Oban needs a Harbour Authority that is committed to Oban and the surrounding area, prepared to plan and invest in Oban's future. A safe, busy Harbour which welcomes visitors and promotes all water-based activities will lead to a thriving, prosperous Oban. Oban has a rich future, attracting inward investment and business growth in many sectors, if the Harbour is seen as safe, well-managed and forward-looking. We must have a new Harbour Authority, operated as a Trust Port, as a matter of urgency."

Andy Spence, Chief Executive, Bid for Oban

"Tourism is the lifeblood of our town and we owe much of our success to the stunning scenery that surrounds us. The Bay offers our visitors constantly changing views as boats, ferries, kayakers and cruise ships go about their business. That they can do this safely is critical and a Trust Port would support all users and ensure equal access to the Harbour. A Trust Port would reinvest any operating surplus back into Oban leading to improved facilities and infrastructure. It's a win-win both for our town and for tourism and Oban must make sure it happens."

Neil Mackay, Oban Tourism Group

Decision time

Representatives of OCHDA met with local MSPs this week to seek their support for the project which will have to go before the Scottish Government for approval.

OCHDA explained that should the Argyll and Bute Harbour Board decide not to support the Trust Port proposal then it looks to be inevitable that the proposal for CMAL to take responsibility for the management of Oban Bay and its Approaches will be resurrected.

More optimistically, if the Harbour Board decide to continue to support the Trust Port option, as they have stated for almost 20 years, then OCHDA is ready to press ahead and bring the project to fruition through further engagement and collaboration with all Stakeholders.

To find out more about the work that OCHDA is doing to bring about a Trust Port for Oban visit: <https://ochda.scot/>

OCHDA is grateful to Stephen Lawson, Ron Stevenson and the Majestic Line for the use of their photographs in this article.

The Harbour Board Special Meeting (2/12/21) is scheduled to start at 12:30.

Currently this meeting is expected to be 'virtual' by Microsoft Teams but this may change. Anyone wishing to observe the meeting should check the agenda on the Argyll & Bute Council website at the end of this week. The decision as to whether the meeting will be virtual or real is expected to be made on Thursday 25th. November.



"As the operator of a significant fishing fleet here in Scotland I have fishing boats going in and out of harbours all over the UK. I see with my own eyes what Trust Ports are able to bring to coastal communities, from Mallaig and Stornoway in the West to Scrabster in the North and Aberdeen in the East.

I know that as a fish landing port Oban has the potential to become a safer and more successful harbour. However, to realise this potential we need an organisation that is committed to Oban and has the vision and energy to make things happen!"

John MacAlister

"The Majestic Line have used Oban Harbour for the past 16 years, and have used the facilities and surrounding vendors to make the Harbour the hub for starting our cruises. In this time we have seen the movement of marine traffic within the Bay massively increase and, whilst this is fantastic for the area, it does pose its own issues. A new Trust Port will, in our opinion, facilitate a new outlook for the Bay moving into an era of increased traffic."

The Majestic Line



BUSINESS NEWS

Benderloch chef wins Andrew Fairlie award



Graham West from Go Naked Veg hands over the latest fruit delivery to Stramash co-team leader Briony McLaughlin and youngsters.

Goodness me! It's Stramash snacktime

Youngsters at Stramash Nursery in Oban are tucking into a government scheme to get their fill of fresh fruit and snacks.

Graham West of Go Naked Veg supplies the Ganavan-based outdoor nursery twice a week with organic, plastic-free deliveries.

Mr West, whose shop in Stevenson Street has just marked its first anniversary, had started his own free fruit scheme before the government announced its own healthy eating package for nurseries.

'Healthy bodies, healthy minds,' said Mr West, whose shop is an extension to the growing business that now delivers over to Mull.

Any nurseries and schools interested in finding out how Go Naked Veg can help them promote health eating and plastic-free living, should visit Go Naked Veg's website at www.gonakedveg.co.uk

Briony McLaughlin, who is the co-team leader at Stramash, said: 'Our ideas as a nursery really align with what Graham is doing, encouraging people to eat healthily and enjoy foods that come without packaging. We're also delighted to be supporting a local business.'

An 'outstanding chef' from Argyll's Isle of Eriska Hotel has been chosen for this year's prestigious Andrew Fairlie Scholarship, set up in memory of the Gleneagles Hotel's famous Perth-born chef, who died of cancer in 2019.

Positioned as 'the ultimate scholarship any aspiring chef could receive', the Andrew Fairlie Scholarship is awarded annually to one female and one male chef in light of 'Andrew's unwavering commitment to diversity in the kitchen'.

The finalists had to prove their worth in a skills test, where they had to recreate a classic Andrew Fairlie dish, and showcase their knowledge, individuality and creativity as a chef by choosing and producing two additional elements to complement this.

Josh Wilkinson, a 25-year-old senior chef de partie at the Isle of Eriska Hotel near Benderloch, impressed the panel of expert judges.

The judges included Michelin star chefs Stephen McLaughlin, head chef at Restaurant Andrew Fairlie, Tom Kerridge, Sat Bains and Lorna McNeen, and 'Scotland's National Chef' Gary Maclean.

Stephen said: 'Every one of the finalists showed great desire and passion to become one of the next Andrew Fairlie Scholars, and many congratulations to Amy and Josh who came out on top and will now receive some inspirational



Andrew Fairlie Scholarship 2021 winners Josh Wilkinson and Amy Stevenson with head judge Stephen McLaughlin.

and educational experiences to help build their careers.'

Spearheaded by the Hospitality Industry Trust (HIT) Scotland and supported by the first minister, Scottish Government, and Gleneagles, the scholarship was launched in February 2019 in recognition of Andrew Fairlie's significant and lasting contribution to the hospitality industry.

David Cochrane, HIT Scotland chief executive, added: 'After the challenges of the last couple of years, it was truly inspiring to see this group of talented chefs in action, showing off

their creativity, hard work and dedication to their craft. Huge congratulations to Amy and Josh, who will now get to experience some fantastic opportunities as Andrew Fairlie Scholars.'

Conor O'Leary, managing director of Gleneagles, said: 'The flair, creativity and passion displayed by all the finalists echoes the culture of excellence that Andrew established and is testament to the extraordinary pool of culinary talent we have here in Scotland.'

'We're thrilled for the winning recipients and look forward to following their careers and supporting them as they develop as chefs.'

US tariff led to 20% drop in whisky exports

The US tariff on single malt Scotch led to a 20 per cent fall in Scotland's whisky exports last year – the equivalent of two million litres of pure alcohol – the latest Scottish Government figures have revealed.

America is the largest overseas export destination for Scotch whisky. Single malt

Scotch whisky exports to the US were valued at £344 million in 2018, accounting for 26 per cent of total overseas single malt exports, and 21 per cent of total drink exports to the US.

In October 2019, the US Government imposed a 25 per cent tariff on single malt Scotch whisky imports from the UK. The tariffs have been temporarily suspended since March 2021, and in June 2021, the UK and US administrations agreed on a five-year suspension.

Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon MSP said: 'The 25 per cent tariff imposed on imports

of single malt Scotch whisky due to the long running Boeing / Airbus trade dispute between the US and the EU – which had nothing to do with Scottish producers – meant Scotland was once again disproportionately hit by the UK Government's posturing on international trade. While we are pleased the dispute and sanctions has now been suspended, the impact on Scottish producers was significant and highlights why we should have a meaningful role in trade discussions to ensure that the interests of the Scottish economy are protected.'

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Married Loganair duo reunite long lost bears in first festive ad

Loganair, the UK's largest regional airline, has joined some of the biggest brands in this year's festivities as it launches its first Christmas advert.

In true Loganair fashion of bringing loved ones together, the advert stars the airline's very own married pilot and in-flight trainer who first met at work 14 years ago.

Captain Lionel McClean and wife Linda, a senior ground and in-flight trainer, star in Loganair's new festive advert as they help bring lost bears Logie and Lottie back together for Christmas.

The couple, who have been together for 11 years and married for eight, feature as they fly lost bear Logie home and back into Lottie's arms, after Linda finds him in her suitcase one cold winter's evening.

Logie and Lottie were introduced as a special keepsake for children flying with the airline in 2018, after Loganair reunited an eight-year-old girl from Orkney with her lost cuddly toy 'Teddy', flying him more than 200 miles back to Kirkwall for a tearful homecoming.

To celebrate the story of Logie and Lottie's reunion, Loganair is giving a family the chance to reconnect with their loved ones this Christmas.



To enter the competition, families across the UK should head to Loganair's Twitter, Facebook or Instagram (@FlyLoganair) pages, to tell the airline their own hopes for reuniting this Christmas.

Kay Ryan, commercial director at Loganair, said: 'We are incredibly excited to be launching our very own Christmas advert and want to give a family the chance to have their own story as they reunite during the festive season.'

Captain Lionel McClean and his wife Linda, a senior ground and in-flight trainer, star in Loganair's new festive advert as they help bring lost bears Logie, inset, and Lottie back together for Christmas.

'We are wholly committed to keeping people connected and we wanted to encapsulate that special journey of bringing loved ones back together following a Christmas where they were apart.'

'It was important to us that our own people were involved in the campaign as we mark a festive period together once again and who better than Lionel and Linda who were themselves brought together via the airline.'

Linda said: 'Lionel and I were delighted to be asked to be part of the Christmas advert and it was a lot of fun filming together.'

'Loganair is at the heart of so many stories of people coming together and through the airline, Lionel and I not only have our own tale to tell, we have been honoured to be part of that journey for so many others.'

To watch Loganair's Christmas advert, head to: www.loganair.co.uk/campaign/christmas-2021

Bute village launches appeal to buy old pub

Villagers in Port Bannatyne on Bute are launching a share offer to raise funds to buy – and reopen – their 200-year-old pub.

Their community share offer aims to get the pub operational after it closed its doors following the economic impact of Covid-19. For the next five weeks, villagers – as well as those living further afield – will be able to buy shares in the pub.

The Anchor Tavern has served the coastal village of Port Bannatyne, on the Isle of Bute, for two centuries and is a lively hub of community and activity. At the start of 2020 there were only

two pubs in Port Bannatyne. When the Anchor shut its doors after the pandemic hit, the village was facing the loss of one of the few local indoor meeting spaces available to the community, as well as 200 years of history.

In response, the newly formed Port Bannatyne Development Trust, a small group of residents and homeowners, successfully lobbied the Scottish Land Fund for £150,000 needed to buy the pub on behalf of the local community.

They now need to crowdfund another £105,000 for the historic pub's refurbishment. Once refurbished, the pub will provide an important

community space for young people, the arts and local history, in addition to its primary purpose.

This is the first time that Scottish public money has been used to support a pub and a community hub on a Scottish Island.

Jon Sear, vice-chair of Port Bannatyne Development Trust, said: 'Our biggest challenge is that we can't accept more shareholders from outside the Port Bannatyne area than live locally, so unless the number of applications from Port residents exceeds our expectations, we have no choice but to prioritise higher value applications from non-residents.'



Villagers have launched a share scheme to reopen their 200-year-old pub.



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Variable Messaging Sign with deer warning messaging. Photo: NatureScot

Deer warning as nights close in

Motorists are being warned to be aware of the increased risk of collisions between deer and vehicles due to the shorter days at this time of year.

With night falling earlier, deer are more likely to venture on to grass verges near roadsides as they browse and feed.

In response to the potential risk, and to safeguard public safety, NatureScot – in conjunction with Transport Scotland and Traffic Scotland – is placing warning messages on electronic variable messaging signs (VMS).

Throughout this month signs have been warning motorists at key locations on the main trunk roads, including the A87, A82 and A85. It is estimated that collisions between deer and vehicles could be as high as 12,000 per year in Scotland, resulting in 50 to 100 human injuries.

The majority take place in early evening through to midnight, with another peak occurring from 6am to 9am.

Over the past 50 years, the number of wild deer in Scotland has increased, as has their range. In the same period, the volume of road traffic has almost doubled.

Jamie Hammond, NatureScot wildlife management officer, said: 'From October to December, deer are more likely to be on the road as they move down to lower ground to find food and shelter.'

'The highest risk is from sunset to midnight and shortly before and after sunrise.'

'Be aware that if you're driving near woods, deer can suddenly appear before you have time to brake.'

'If you do hit a deer, report it to the police, even if you're uninjured and your car isn't damaged, as the deer may be fatally injured and suffering.'



Left: Work begins on Dibidil bothy on Rum and, above, the bothy complete and cosy with its new roof.

Remote Rum and Skye bothies get new roofs

Despite considerable challenges, volunteers of the Mountain Bothies Association have successfully completed work re-roofing two of its most remote bothies - Dibidil in Rum and Ollisdal in Skye.

At Dibidil, after most materials had been delivered, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic caused an 18-month delay to work starting.

During the delay, some food went out of date and had to be replaced, the materials left outside had to be moved into the bothy because their protective polythene covers had disintegrated due to UV and strong winds, and some of the petrol for generators had evaporated and also had to be replaced.

Work finally got under way in September this year. Eighteen volunteers worked for 220-person days; some of this time being needed for the challenging five-mile walk to and from Kinloch, the only island habitation.

Six people stayed for the entire 23 days. The work party also received considerable assistance



Ollisdal with its new roof in place.

from the local fish farm in transporting food and equipment by boat.

Ollisdal bothy also has a new roof. It was particularly urgent that this work was undertaken as soon as possible after most Covid-19 restrictions were lifted – the existing roof had been badly damaged by winter storms and the

bothy was unusable.

Hard work by a small work party in early October saw the damaged roof removed and a new one installed.

Mountain Bothies Association chairman Simon Birch said: 'We thank all of our volunteers at the two work parties for their considerable efforts and for their willing compliance with the additional precautions necessary to ensure a Covid-19 secure working environment.'

The Mountain Bothies Association is a charity established in 1965, with around 4,300 members.

With the consent and support of their owners, it undertakes the restoration and maintenance of old cottages, huts and similar buildings throughout the wilder parts of Scotland, England and Wales for use as open shelters for walkers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

It currently maintains 103 bothies and two emergency shelters, 84 in Scotland, 12 in northern England and nine in Wales.

First new beaver trial licence issued since Knapdale releases

A second site for reintroducing beavers has been announced by NatureScot – the first new one since beavers were brought to Knapdale in Argyll. The new site is in the Forth catchment area, northeast of Doune at Argaty, on the edge of the current range for beavers in Scotland.

The protected species licence will allow beavers to be trapped and taken from areas where they are causing serious agricultural damage for farmers and where mitigation measures have not been successful or are not possible.

A survey published in August this year found beaver numbers have doubled in Scotland in three years to around 1,000 animals, and that

the population is rapidly expanding out from Tayside, with territory numbers also more than doubling to 251. The population survey released this summer also revealed beavers now range from Glen Isla to Dundee and Stirling, Forfar to Crianlarich, and is likely to expand into Loch Lomond in the future.



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SCOTTISH FIELD

December

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Marie-Claire Kerr art and design... Birds nests...

Aberdeenshire photographer Dan Christie...



Deadly larch disease hits Oban forest

Forestry and Land Scotland is preparing for felling work at Cologin Forest by Lerags, just south of Oban, in a bid to limit the impact of a deadly tree disease, writes Sandy Neil.

Phytophthora ramorum, which mainly affects and kills larch trees, has no known cure or remedy and the only available response requires felling affected trees before the disease has a chance to move on to new sites.

Forestry and Land Scotland has been served a Statutory Plant Health Notice that requires all affected trees – and other larch within a buffer zone – are felled by the end of February 2022.

Donald McNeill, FLS planning manager in the area, said: ‘The forest at Cologin is immediately adjacent to the main Oban water supply reservoir so we are liaising closely with Scottish Water, local neighbours and communities at Kilmore and Lerags as we prepare for this felling work.

‘We’ll have to construct forest tracks to get in to the site and, because public safety is always a top priority for us, we will, for a while, be closing off recreational access to Cologin Forest.

‘The impact of the disease can be devastating

for larch and can have a significant impact on the look of forests and of the wider landscape. But if we are to slow the spread of this disease we must act quickly.

‘Slowing its spread also buys time for all the people who are working behind the scenes to find alternative, viable ways of tackling the disease.

‘We apologise in advance for any inconvenience that this might cause.’

FLS will begin site preparations from December with the main felling and extraction operations taking place from late 2021 into 2022.

The agency said the worksite zone will be strictly a no-go area, and it urges all visitors to observe and obey the safety signage in the forest.

The spores that cause the disease can travel from forest to forest on twigs, leaf litter and mud so anyone who regularly visits forests in the area can help stop the spread of the disease by following FLS’s ‘Keep It Clean’ advice and brush off forest debris and mud from their boots, walking gear, bike wheels and dogs paws before and after a forest visit.

Work to fell the larch in Cologin Forest will begin before the end of the year. For safety reasons the forest will be a no-go zone as work is happening.



Mullman

DANIEL BROOKS
editor@obantimes.co.uk



Dolphin mystery in Craignure Bay

As I was leaving Craignure on the ferry to Oban recently, I spotted a lone common dolphin in the bay acting a little oddly, close to a fishing buoy.

I have worked with dolphins and had hundreds of encounters but I have never seen a common dolphin from the Oban ferry before, only bottle noses, and I have never seen a common dolphin alone, swimming round and round a buoy so I was concerned it could have been tangled up in something.

Because I was soon too far away to help, I raised the alarm to see if someone else could check that it was okay.

Thanks to Nick and Anna Bonetti for their help doing this.

Nancy Somerville, a local wildlife enthusiast from Craignure, also reported seeing it around a buoy as did a few others.

A storm came in and it was 24 hours before my mate Toby and I could get back out to check it.

We searched the coastline looking for it, thinking, from other reports, that it may be still mobile, dragging the buoy around with it but we eventually found it back in Craignure bay in exactly the same place I had seen it before.

I tried to find someone with a boat to get out to check on it but the storm was still blowing and no boats were in the water or handy.

British Divers Marine Life Rescue were contacted again but without confirmation that the dolphin was actually entangled could not send a team, understandably.

So, myself and friends set off on the third day to get out there to confirm this and get pictures.

Nicholas Waller suited up and set off in his kayak.

He returned to confirm there was a dolphin at the buoy and that it was, in his opinion, entangled.

It was swimming round and round the buoy no further than a few meters and he said the buoy was even submerging occasionally as if being pulled under by the dolphin.

A local fisherman called Alister turned up and agreed to take us out to have a closer look and possibly cut this animal free.

When we arrived, the dolphin was there and started to swim very close around the boat, frantically, leaping etc.

It was soon clear that it was not entangled as we had thought, but was certainly strangely obsessed with this one fishing float.



The dolphin Daniel Brooks spotted acting oddly in Craignure Bay.

It also became clear that there were other common dolphins in the area. Presumably from the same pod that were hanging around unwilling to leave their pod member.

So, we left, very cold, wet, confused and curious with more questions than answers.

Why was this dolphin obsessed with this buoy?

Was there a dead animal caught in the gear below? Was this animal grieving or still trying to save a dead loved one? Or was it just sick in some way?

Some suggested it was feeding on small fish around the buoy but all in attendance thought that highly unlikely.

The next day I spoke with Darren Clark the local fisherman, as he was fishing this fleet of creels.

The dolphin was still there but there was nothing unusual in his gear when he hauled it. He also said he had never seen anything like it.

The dolphin was coming right up to them ‘as if trying to tell them something’. Maybe we will never know what it was about.

Huge thanks to all that got involved in this story: the ladies at the CalMac office and the info centre; Scallasdale Fish Farm; Inverlussa Mussels; Alister the friendly fisherman; Nancy Somerville a local nature lover; Nick for his brave kayak trip in nasty weather; and friends Toby and Derek for their continued perseverance in trying to help.

A true community effort.

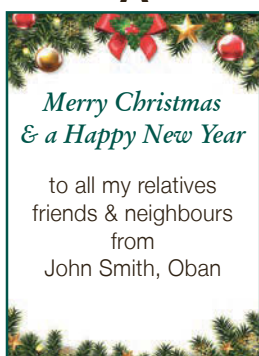
The dolphin is still there at the time of writing and will be kept an eye on. A classic wildlife mystery.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Published on 9th December

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LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Panto is back – oh yes, it is!

by Sandy Neil
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

From the team that brought you Rapunzel – A Tangled Tale, Fiddler on the Roof and Camelot – The Panto, Spotlight Musical Theatre Group returns for Oban's 2021 panto: Treasure Island.

Long John Silver wants to get his hands on some treasure and discovers that Squire Trelawney owns a ship – so he needs to trick the Squire into letting him and his dastardly lot of ne'er-do-wells be on board – he also needs to find some more salty seadogs to complete the crew – and he ends up with a rather strange bunch!

The Squire's daughter Jennifer has also fallen in love with Mrs Hawkins' (the landlady of the local pub) son Jim, but he is off to seek his fortune having signed up to join the ship's crew. Will they be torn apart by the hunt for treasure? Will Mrs Hawkins win first prize in the Women's Institute's annual bake competition? Will the pirates cover be blown on their way to Treasure Island?

Find out by joining them from

December 2-4 at 7.30pm at the Corran Halls. There is also a matinee performance on Saturday December 4 at 2pm. Children are welcome to dress up to really get into the panto spirit.

This production is bursting with larger-than-life characters and hijinks, plus lots of local faces in this family-friendly show. With plenty of music, dancing and laughs this panto has something for everyone.

Director Stephen Day explains: 'It's been a very different process this year with Covid-restrictions in the rehearsal room and compressed timescales, but the whole cast and crew have really pulled together and are making the final preparations to bring the joy of live theatre back to Oban.'

Tickets are on sale now from the Corran Halls Box Office on 01631 567333. For more information visit www.spotlightmtg.co.uk/tickets

Spotlight Musical Theatre Group returns for Oban's 2021 =: Treasure Island.



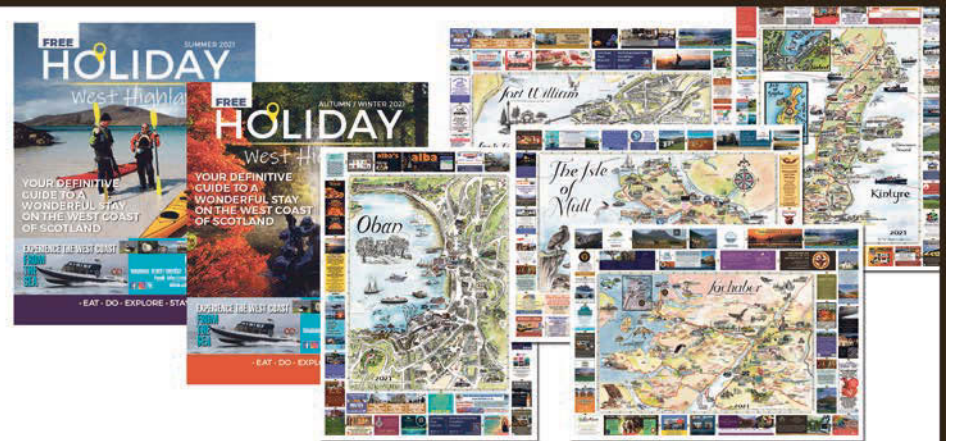
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Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



After missing last year, there will be a welcome return to the annual Park Bar quiz on Tuesday December 7 - or 'Quiz in the Park' as it is called this year.

I imagine the scores will be considerably higher than previously because everybody is very well practised at quizzes these days after all the lockdown hours spent on Zoom quizzes.

There must barely be a quiz question that hasn't been asked over the last year and a half.

If there's one man to find fresh questions, though, it is Donnie 'Maroot' Macleod and it is he who will be doing just that. He is well versed in hosting quizzes having recently hosted his own works quiz over on the Isle of Man.

I am told one of the rounds in that quiz was 'Lockdown' where all the answers included either 'lock' or 'down'.

It was bad enough that his first question apparently was: 'Which body of water in Scotland is said to have a monster?', knowing that all his local colleagues pronounce Loch Ness as 'Lock' Ness.

But his second question was even worse: 'What is the Scottish Gaelic word for brown?' Gaelic speakers will have a laugh at that joke, the word in question being 'donn', but whether Donnie's colleagues enjoyed it quite as much is a matter for only Donnie to know.

The Park Bar quiz will boast teams from territorial associations, Gaelic choirs, bands,



Kathryn Callander, John Joe MacNeil, John Campbell, Ian Lamont, Kaitlin Ross, Jamie MacDonald, and Mary Ann Kennedy.

and random groups of friends - all competing for the coveted prize.

Will Ardnamurchan reclaim their title from current champions, Cumbernauld Gaelic Choir? Will Skerryvore be the highest placed band again?

There is only one way to find out. There will be a raffle with all proceeds going to the lifeboats and the evening begins at half seven for eight o'clock.

Tiree Association

The Tiree Association annual gathering concert went ahead last Thursday evening and was streamed live on Facebook.

I am on tour down in England at the moment so I haven't managed to watch the concert back, however, I hear it was a fantastic success.

The association expressed its thanks on Facebook to everyone who helped to make the concert a big success.

It wrote that it was thorough-

ly entertained by a host of very talented musicians: Mary Ann Kennedy, Jamie MacDonald, Kaitlin Ross, John Joe MacNeil, Kathryn Callander, and association piper John Campbell.

The chairperson, Ian Lamont, kept the evening going with lots of tales and laughs.

Gratitude was also expressed to Nick Turner for all his technical and sound assistance and to the dedicated bakers who provided the refreshments.

There was a huge response to the raffle so the association's final thanks was, therefore, to all who donated prizes and to everyone who bought tickets.

I am sorry to have missed the concert but delighted that it went ahead.

I would echo the association's hope, expressed in the same Facebook post, that this is the return of live events and that we will see many more similar functions very soon.

Levelling up for Gaelic media

Levelling up in both statute and finance and planning for a positive digital future for Gaelic, these are the key messages in MG ALBA's ambitious vision for the future of Gaelic media.

Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media outlines a future where Gaelic media is at the heart of Gaelic communities; generating growth in language capability; a key economic driver; and ensuring that young people have a digital domain which will be crucial to ensure the future of the language.

At the core of this vision is a statement of intent that prioritises Gaelic media audiences. Containing wide-ranging targets which have young people as a focus, it is evident that Gaelic media in the digital world is an essential element in addressing the positioning of Gaelic in modern society.

Beyond the audience benefits, it is a bold vision for Gaelic media which demonstrates the significant opportunities which could be realised for communities, language, and economy.

Leading this vision, MG ALBA celebrates the community, partnerships and industry delivery which are fundamental to Gaelic media but highlights the important areas which are preventing Gaelic media from delivering on what its potential promises.

MG ALBA Chair Allan MacDonald said: 'Our new Lèirsinn is a wake-up call for all our stakeholders and partners to come together and provide the basis for the Gaelic public service media of the future.'

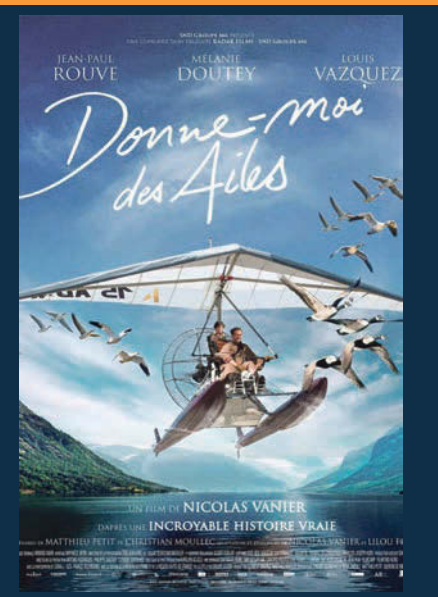
'This vision outlines an opportunity that cannot be allowed to pass for our culture and our economy. There is a

real risk that failing to establish Gaelic media in the digital world will have repercussions for our language and our communities.'

MG ALBA Chief Executive Donald Campbell said: 'Ofcom has been warning broadcasters that they need to speed up their transformation for the digital age. Among other things, Gaelic media urgently need to address the needs of younger audiences with news and media content that is simply not possible within current resources.'

'This Lèirsinn is a Route Map for doing just that. It is an investment proposition that sets out how Gaelic media can connect with all audience segments and be a catalyst for growth in language, in our communities and our economies. It demonstrates what Gaelic media could deliver if it is given the right tools.'

What's on at Oban Cinema



Piano to Zankar is an award-winning British documentary film which tells the story of Desmond O'Keefe, also known as Mr. Gentle, a 65-year old piano tuner who embarks on an impossible mission. Facing his future in retirement, "sitting in deck chairs and eating lemon drizzle cake", Desmond decides instead to take on the most challenging and perilous delivery of his four-decade career: transporting a 100-year-old, 80 kilos, Broadwood and Sons upright piano, from bustling London to the remote heart of the Indian Himalayas.

French Film Festival: Spread Your Wings Christian (Jean-Paul Rouve), is a visionary scientist who studies migrating geese. His son Thomas, age 14, is obsessed by video games - His thoughts of spending a 3-week summer holiday alone with his father on a Camargue farm are nightmarish. Remarkably enough, father and son bond in a joint effort to save an endangered species of geese thanks to Christian's pilot skills with ultra-light aircraft. Preparations begin for an extraordinary and perilous journey -- the pair plan to lead the geese they've raised onto new and safer migration routes.

Adventurer, explorer, director-coscreenwriter Nicolas Vanier adapts his own eponymous novel, itself inspired by the incredible true story of Christian Moullec (co-scriptwriter).

Friday 26 November

Encanto | PG 12:30/16:45
Doc of the month: Piano to Zankar | 12A 16:30
 The French Dispatch | 15 18:45
 The Eternals | 12A 19:30

Saturday 27 November

Encanto | PG 12:00/14:45
 No Time To Die | 12A 12:15
French Film Festival: Spread Your Wings | PG 17:30
Doc of the month: Piano to Zankar | 12A 18:15
 The Eternals | 12A 20:15
 The French Dispatch | 15 20:30

Sunday 28 November

Encanto | PG 12:15/15:00
 Boss Baby 2 | PG 12:30
 Anything Goes | TBC 15:00
French Film Festival: Spread Your Wings | PG 17:30
St. Andrews Weekend: Whisky Galore! | U 18:00
Doc of the month: Piano to Zankar | 12A 20:00
 The Eternals | 12A 20:15

Wednesday 1 December (subtitled screenings day)

Encanto | PG 12:30★/16:30★/17:30★
 The Eternals | 12A 19:15★
 The French Dispatch | 15 20:00★

Thursday 2 December

Encanto | PG 12:30/16:30/17:30
 The Eternals | 12A 19:15
 The French Dispatch | 15 20:00

★Key: HOH - Subtitles for the hard of hearing.

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MONDAY: 8am-12pm Breakfast show with Stephen
12-3pm Lunch with Bob G
5pm-7pm Drive Times with Marcus
7pm-8pm Highland Fling with Rosemary
8pm-9pm Calum McLuckies Show
9pm David Cullen Show

TUESDAY: 8am-10am Breakfast Show with Stephen
10am-12.30pm Ken Hunter
1pm-3pm Macky on FM
5pm-7pm Drive Times with Archie Darling
7pm-8pm Highest Praise with Stuart Chalmers
8pm-9pm Scottish Sounds with Archie Cameron
9pm Oban Pride on the Waves with Jay & Crystal

WEDNESDAY: 8am-11am Breakfast Show with Stephen
11am-1pm Comfort Zone with Lesley
1pm-3pm Doug in the afternoon
4pm-7pm Drive Times with Campbell
7pm-9pm Country meets Rock N Roll with Len
9pm Gordon's Grooves

THURSDAY: 8am-11am Breakfast Show with Andy & Sarah
11am-2pm Lunch Show with Steve
3pm-7pm Drive Time with Stephen
7pm-9pm Christine's Collections
9pm-10pm Ann's Ceilidh
10pm Margo Till Midnight

FRIDAY: 8am-10am Breakfast Show with Anna & Phil
10am-1pm The Brunch Show With The One
1pm-4pm Bob G Country, Rhythm & Blues show
4pm-6.45pm Teeney & Tiny Show with Harry & Janet
6.45pm-7pm Sports View with the Dream Team
7pm-8pm Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig
8pm-10pm Evening Show with Peter Rainnie

SATURDAY: 8am-10am Breakfast Show with Andy
10am-1pm Saturday Morning Live with Linda
2pm-4pm Jukebox Jamboree with Ken Mc
6pm-7pm Sports View with the Dream Team
7pm-8pm Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling
8pm-10pm Evening Show with Dave Hobbs

SUNDAY: 9am-11am Sunday Morning with Breege
11am-2pm Sunday Brunch with Stephen
3pm-5pm Mediation with Heartfelt Change
7pm-9pm New Country Show with Dave & Murdoch
9pm Drum & Bass with Graham.

Highland Book Prize reveals its longlist

by Kirsteen Bell
editor@obantimes.co.uk

The Highland Book Prize has announced the 12 titles on its 2021 Longlist.

Presented by the Highland Society of London, and facilitated by Moniak Mhor Writers' Centre, the prize seeks to recognise the rich talent, landscape and cultural diversity of the Highlands and Islands.

There were more than 70 submissions for the 2021 prize: each title was reviewed and scored multiple times by a volunteer panel of 180 readers from around the world.

The final longlist includes *An Seachdamh Tonn* | The Seventh Wave, by Sandaidh NicDhòmhnaill Jones and produced by Stornoway publisher Acair Books; *In a Veil of Mist* by Lewisman Donald S. Murray; and *Hiort*, a Gaelic detective fiction novel based around St. Kilda, by Iain F. Macleod.

Speaking about *Hiort*, one member of the reading panel said: 'Crime novels are hugely popular in Scotland, and it is great to see such a wonderful novel written in Gaelic.'

'The content matched traditional cultural practices



with modern technology and ways of thinking, creating a unique and exciting story.' Iain is originally from Lewis and now based on Skye.

He told The Oban Times: 'I'm pretty delighted to have been nominated for the longlist for the Highland Book Prize - it means a lot to writers that it exists, and it shows the amazing amount of talent there is, and how deep the well is for story and subject matter with Highland connection.'

'It's brought a couple of cracking books to my attention as well. A lot of people give a lot of their time to make the award happen, we're grateful for that.'

The full 2021 Longlist is:
■ *An Seachdamh Tonn* | The Seventh Wave, Sandaidh

NicDhòmhnaill Jones (Gaelic poetry, Acair).

■ *Ben Dorain: a Conversation with a Mountain*, Garry MacKenzie (Poetry, The Irish Pages Press/Cló An Mhíl Bhui).

■ *Borges and Me: An Encounter*, Jay Parini (Autofiction, Canongate).

■ *Deep Wheel Orcadia*, Harry Josephine Giles (Poetry, Picador).

■ *Hiort*, Iain F. Macleod (Gaelic fiction, CLÀR).

■ *In a Veil of Mist*, Donald S. Murray (Fiction, Saraband).

■ *Islands of Abandonment: Life in the Post-Human Landscape*, Cal Flyn (Non-fiction, William Collins).

■ *Of Stone and Sky*, Merryn Glover (Fiction, Birlinn).

The books of three local authors have been celebrated on the longlist of a vital literary award.

■ *Regeneration: The Rescue of a Wild Land*, Andrew Painting (Non-fiction, Birlinn).

■ *Slaves and Highlanders: Silenced Histories of Scotland and the Caribbean*, David Alston (Non-fiction, Edinburgh University Press).

■ *The Stone Age*, Jen Hadfield (Poetry, Picador).

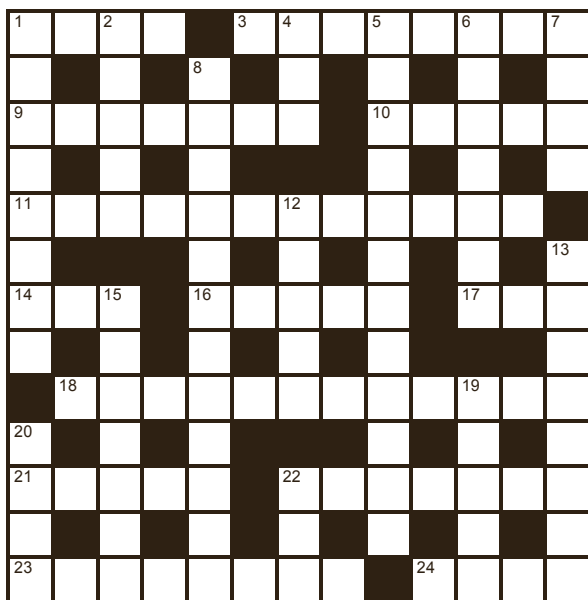
■ *VEEVE*, Christine De Luca (Poetry, Mariscat Press).

Each title on the list will now be considered by the Judging Panel, who will announce the shortlist in March 2022.

Chairperson of the Judging Panel, Alex Ogilvie, who grew up near Fort William and is a trustee of the Highland Society of London, said: 'Already celebrating its fifth anniversary, the Highland Book Prize goes from strength to strength in terms of the quality of the longlist titles and the engagement by authors, publishers, bookshops, and the reading public.'

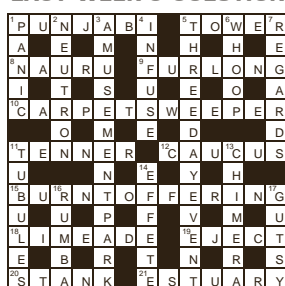
The winning title will be awarded in spring 2022. For more information about the longlist visit www.highland-bookprize.org.uk

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Take into custody (4)
 - 3 African country (8)
 - 9 Most distant point (7)
 - 10 Stinks (5)
 - 11 Displacement (12)
 - 14 Little troublemaker (3)
 - 16 Post-op time (5)
 - 17 Loose (3)
 - 18 Children's poem (7,5)
 - 21 Tusked beast (5)
 - 22 Revive (7)
 - 23 Senior female (8)
 - 24 Plaything (4)
- Down**
- 1 Aided by hanging from this of another (8)
 - 2 Plants (5)
 - 4 Tiny particle (3)
 - 5 Lab heater (6,6)
 - 6 Lens type (7)
 - 7 In addition to the aforementioned (4)
 - 8 Sweet tool (12)
 - 12 Old anesthetic (5)
 - 13 Outer (8)
 - 15 Dearth (7)
 - 19 Happy cry (5)
 - 20 Push (4)
 - 22 Service charge (3)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



Lorn Festival moves dates to May

After an absence of two years Lorn Drama Festival are getting ready to raise the curtain in 2022 and are looking for would-be thespians to join their show, writes Fiona Scott.

The popular event usually takes place annually in March but after the enforced break, the organising committee has decided to move it to later in the year. The 2022 festival will take place in the Corran Halls between May 3 and 7.

Mike Rowell, chairman of the organising committee explained the move to the May date: 'We are moving from the March dates to give groups with winter shows more rehearsal time and we hope to attract more teams from the central belt.'

'We also hope that the festival may be an entertaining night out for any visitors in the town at the beginning of May.'

The Lorn Drama Festival is open to any amateur group who wish to perform a one-



Benderloch and North Connel Drama Club plan to perform the award-winning *Penguin Diplomacy* at the 2022 festival.

act play. The plays should be between 20 to 55 minutes long and have at least two speaking parts. Plays can be either published scripts or written specially for the festival. There is even a special playwriting prize for dramas in their first production.

To take part, teams don't have to be part of a recognised drama club but can be any

group of people interested in taking part - schools, SWRI groups and Young Farmers have all contributed teams in the past. Writers' groups and other artistic clubs may want to try their hands at performance.

There is no entry fee for the festival, but teams are responsible for their own production costs, including any licensing

costs for their play.

The festival will assist with travel and accommodation costs, and will cover venue and marketing costs for all the performances. Advice and assistance on staging productions are also available for groups who are new to it.

Teams perform in front of a paying audience and an adjudicator, who gives feedback on each performance and, at the end of the festival, awards trophies for the best productions.

The adjudicator is always a respected theatre professional who can share their experience and give advice and encouragement to the performers.

Any groups interested in taking part should contact Lorn Drama Festival via their Facebook page. They would also like to hear from any individuals interested in drama who are not connected to a club and the festival will put you in touch with like-minded people in your area.

Dark Skies Festival to light up winter nights

A festival taking advantage of the winter dark nights is making its return to the Western Isles next February.

The Hebridean Dark Skies Festival's arts and astronomy programme on Lewis will bring together Scotland's new Astronomer Royal Catherine Heymans, singer-songwriter Rachel Sermanni, award-winning science communicator Roberto Trotta and lots more.

It is the fourth Hebridean Dark Skies Festival and opens on Friday February 11, kicking off a two-week programme of arts and astronomy events at An Lanntair, community venues across Lewis, and online. It is supported by new funding from Caledonian MacBrayne and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Festival director Andrew Eaton-Lewis said: 'We're thrilled to be bringing the Hebridean Dark Skies Festival back for a fourth year, and very grateful to Caledonian MacBrayne and Highlands and Islands Enterprise for their support. The Isle of Lewis is a breathtakingly beautiful place to be in winter; on a clear night our views of the stars and the Northern Lights are just incredible.

'And even if the weather is against us, we'll be offering another packed line-up of indoor events, exploring astronomy, the night sky, and our relationship with darkness



Observatory astronomers Catherine Heymans and Joe Zuntz pictured together in the dome of the 1894 building in support of their 2017 Edinburgh Fringe performance.

through comedy, music, theatre, film, visual art, workshops and more, much of it coinciding with the school half-term holidays. If you like the idea of a winter break on the Isle of Lewis, now is the time.'

Catherine said: 'I'm delighted to join the 2022 Dark Skies Festival in celebration of one of the Hebrides' most famous natural resources - its pristine dark view into the wilderness that is our Universe.'

Events include:

■ The Universe: Does Anything Matter? This is the opening night of astronomy and comedy by Astronomer

Royal for Scotland Catherine Heymans and astrophysicist and comedian Joe Zuntz, following a screening of Sunset Reports, a beautiful, poetic film by artist Juliana Capes that describes an entire sunset for the visually impaired.

■ The closing night show will be by acclaimed singer-songwriter Rachel Sermanni.

■ The Edge of The Sky | Oir Nan Speur, a new, bilingual theatre adaptation of Roberto Trotta's internationally acclaimed book in which the Italian astrophysicist attempts to tell the history of the Universe using only the 1,000 most frequently used words in the English language. Performed in English and Gaelic.

■ A Dark Skies exhibition featuring newly commissioned work by a group of Hebridean artists, curated by the Hebridean Dark Skies Festival and An Lanntair.

■ A science-themed comedy show with Bright Club, headlining a day of astronomy talks on the festival's opening weekend.

■ Stargazing events across the island with Highland Astronomy plus indoor, weather-proof stargazing with Cosmos Planetarium.

■ A night swim with Immerse Hebrides.

Tickets for events are on sale throughout this month, with more programme announcements and updates to follow.

Arts charity raises £10,000 in week, but needs more help to secure future

Ullapool arts charity An Talla Solais reached its initial target of £10,000 within the first week of its crowdfunding campaign to secure its future, with 'an incredible outpouring of support and encouragement' from the community, writes Sandy Neil.

'The first £10,000 will be spent on renovating their Market Street offices to create a multi-purpose community arts hub in Ullapool,' explained An Talla Solais' communications coordinator Iseabal Hendry.

'This will encompass both long- and short-term studios, ceramics facility, arts-library and dedicated community room for workshops and events. The Market Street building needs significant renovation to be used in this way,

and An Talla Solais are excited to have secured the funds to make this happen. The incredible show of support from the Highland community has also allowed the charity to dream a little bigger.


'Over the years An Talla Solais' activities have taken place from multiple spaces - their gallery, studios and office buildings. Similarly their Dolphin Arts group, which works with people living with dementia in Ullapool, has worked from several different locations over the years.

'The charity has been fortunate enough to have the support of different venues to make this all possible, but with the recent loss of its gallery, members now need to think

outside of the box. In order to secure a stand-alone gallery in the future - they need to go further.

'An Talla Solais' full target of £20,000 would bring it closer to creating a dedicated space for exhibitions: a stand-alone gallery for world-class, contemporary art right here in the Scottish Highlands. Alongside creating a creative community hub on Market Street, the charity wants to harness the creative ideas that have been suggested over the course of our campaign and go further to securing the future of arts in Ullapool.'

To pledge your support please head to - www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/help-secure-the-future-of-an-talla-solais



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<p>DIARDAOIN 25 An t-Samhain THURSDAY 25 November</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 Beartas nan Daoine/The Peoples Riches</p> <p>19.25 Dan</p> <p>19.30 SpeakGaelic S1 Ep5 Dachaigh/Home</p> <p>20.00 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>20.30 Eòrpa/European Current Affairs</p> <p>21.00 Eilean Chanaigh/Summer on Canna</p> <p>22.00 Mach a Seo!</p> <p>22.30 Sealgairean Mara/Genius Sea Hunters</p> <p>23.25 Fraochy Bay</p> <p>23.30 Transatlantic Sessions: Dluh an Daimh</p>	<p>23.00 Scottish Premiership - St Johnstone v Hibernian</p> <p>00.45 Binneas-Na Trads</p> <p>DIDÒMHNAICH 28 An t-Samhain SUNDAY 28 November</p> <p>16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>18.15 An Là</p> <p>18.30 Seachd Là / News Review</p> <p>19.30 Alleluia/Spiritual praise</p> <p>20.00 Eorpa/European Current Affairs</p> <p>20.30 Miann na Maighdinn-mara/Mermaid Tales</p> <p>21.00 Sruth</p> <p>22.00 Bannan (S6 Ep1)</p> <p>22.40 Bannan (S6 Ep2)</p> <p>23.00 DNA /Danish Drama</p> <p>23.40 Fraochy Bay</p> <p>23.45 Sgeul Slainte</p> <p>DILUAIN 29 An t-Samhain MONDAY 29 November</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 Dileas-Working Horses</p> <p>19.30 SpeakGaelic (S1 Ep7) Obair/Work</p> <p>20.00 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>20.30 An Cuan Sgith/The Minch with Anne Lunden</p> <p>21.00 Trusach - An Turas Chun Ear: Manus's Daibhidh/The Trip East: Magnus and Daibhidh</p> <p>22.00 Bannan (S6 Ep3)</p> <p>22.30 Mairi Mhor</p> <p>23.30 Mach a Seo!</p> <p>DIMÀIRT 30 An t-Samhain TUESDAY 30 November</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 Beartas nan Daoine/The People's Riches</p>	<p>19.25 Dan</p> <p>19.30 Celtic Connections Shorts</p> <p>19.40 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>19.50 FIFA World Cup Qualifier: Spain v Scotland</p> <p>21.55 Celtic Connections Shorts</p> <p>22.00 Eilean Chanaigh/Winter on Canna</p> <p>23.00 Fraochy Bay</p> <p>23.05 Machair</p> <p>23.30 Alleluia</p> <p>DICIADAIN 1 An Dùbhlachd WEDNESDAY 1 December</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 Celtic Connections Shorts</p> <p>19.10 An Là</p> <p>19.20 Live. SPFL Challenge Cup-Queen of the South v Greenock Morton</p> <p>21.30 Transatlantic Sessions: Dluh an Daimh</p> <p>22.00 Scottish Premiership: St Mirren v Ross County</p> <p>23.45 Na Tuinichean Mi-thoilichte/Drama</p> <p>DIARDAOIN 2 An Dùbhlachd THURSDAY 2 December</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 Beartas nan Daoine/The People's Riches</p> <p>19.25 Dan</p> <p>19.30 SpeakGaelic S1 Ep6 Tide/Time</p> <p>20.00 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>20.30 Eòrpa/European Current Affairs</p> <p>21.00 Colin Macleod: When it Kicks In</p> <p>22.00 Mach a Seo!</p> <p>22.30 Sealgairean Mara/Genius Sea Hunters</p> <p>23.20 Celtic Connections Shorts</p> <p>23.30 Transatlantic Sessions: Dluh an Daimh</p>
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COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD



74%

Local newspapers
in print and digital (74%) are more than
three times more trusted
for local news and information than
social media platforms such as
Facebook and LinkedIn (22%)

Source: YouGov 2018

Coffee Morning + Christmas Fayre

Saturday 27th November

10am-2pm

Oban

Congregational Church Hall

Christmas gifts, craft and cake stall, raffle

Tea, Coffee and Home baking



EVEN SANTA KNOWS WHERE TO GO FOR ALL OUR GIFTS IDEAS

There's no need to fight the internet and deliveries this year, Oban has everything you need from fluffy socks to handmade works of art. Come and explore and dont forget some shops are open late for shopping every Thursday, starts November 26th till December 24th.

1. Fancy That



A family run business specializing in gaming merchandise, Scottish gifts as well as other bespoke products.
Address: 108 George street, Oban

2. Cancer Research



Charity retailer offering donated, second-hand items including books, clothing and household goods.
Address: 101 George St, Oban

3. Bay Bath & Body



Newly opened shop offering beautiful Skincare, Body-Care, Candles and Artisan Gifts
Address: 98 George Street, Oban

4. Regatta



Outdoor clothing store for men, women and children who want to enjoy the great outdoors.
Address: 94 George St, Oban

5. Trespass



The Great Outdoors is for everyone, whether you're mad for the mountains or a high street hiker. Your kind of adventure is their kind of adventure. Afford to explore more with Trespass
Address: 81 George St, Oban

6. Oban Whisky & Fine Wine



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Address: 19 Stafford St, Oban

7. Room 15



A small, independent gift shop selling a range of quirky, Scottish and handcrafted gifts, together with more renowned labels.
Address: 15 Stafford St, Oban

8. The Wee Gallery



In here you will find a wide and varied selection of artwork by local artists. Everything from original watercolour paintings of Scottish scenery and animals to unique jewellery produced in Oban.
Address: 3 Stafford St, Oban

9. Highland Soap Co



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11. Button Nose Boutique



An aladdin's cave of gift ideas from baby clothes 0-36 months, baby gifts, handbags, jewellery, greetings cards, scarves, umbrellas, candles, purses, men's gifts, homewares and much more!!!

Address: 12 Ards Crescent, Oban

12. The Sports Shop



More than you think, not only a proper sports shop that stock footwear, clothing and equipment along with expert advice but also stocking great gift ideas from major brands.
Address: 4 Macgregor Ct, Oban

13. Made in Argyll



A great shop full of arts, crafts and gifts that have been handcrafted by 40 local artisans.
Address: Railway Pier, Unit 5, The Waterfront, Oban

14. Alba Kitchen Garden



A busy delicatessen stocking fine cheese, cold meats and other goodies!
Address: 6 Albany St, Oban

15. Alba



A small but perfectly formed art shop specialising in framed prints, unusual gifts and hard-to-find art materials.
Address: 6 Albany St, Oban

**Pictures are for illustration only*

16. Oban Tweed Centre



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17. The Wool & Needlecraft Centre



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18. Taste of Argyll



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Around the markets

United Auctions, Lochboisdale,

Tuesday November 16: sold 977 sheep of all classes. Lambs sold to £100 from 10 Sollas to average £68.94(+£15.70). Rounding off the two days' sales at Lochboisdale, all classes of lambs and sheep sold extremely well. Many lots of second and third draw lambs were exceeding the values obtained at earlier sales for top draws. All classes of sheep sold in keeping with current mainland values.

LAMBS – SUFFx - £100, 10 Sollas; £98, 2 Sollas; £96, £82, 6 Rhughashinish; £79, Croismorag; £77, 27 Ardivachair; £76, 6 Rhughashinish. TEXx - £87, £83, 18 West Gerinish; £83, 200/233 Stoneybridge; £83, 8 Nunton. CHEV - £100, 10 Sollas; £94, 225 Stoneybridge; £93, 10 Sollas; £92, 14 Baleshare; £86, 5 Mas Grimsay; £83, 2 Grenitote; £82, 10 Sollas; CROSS - £88, 10 Sollas; £84, 2 Grenitote; £80, 29 Claddach; £79, Doon; £79, 27 Ardivachair; £77, 3 Bunavullin; £75, 225 Stoneybridge. BF - £88, Aird Illery; £80, Aird Illery; £80, 6 Rhughashinish; £79, 29 Claddach.

EWES – SUFFx - £76, 330 North Boisdale; £64, 29 Claddach; £60, 5 Howmore. TEXx - £87, 18 West Gerinish. CHEV - £90,

£82, Aird Illery; £76, 261 Daliburgh; £74, Aird Illery. CROSS - £82, 225 Stoneybridge; £70, 4 Howmore. BF - £72, Aird Illery; £56, 6 Dunganichy.

GIMMERS – CHEVx - £100, 4 Howmore. RAMS – CHEV - £130, 6 Ormiclate; £110, 4 West Gerinish. BF - £140, 5 Mas Grimsay.

United Auctions, Lochboisdale,

Tuesday November 15: 394 suckled calves and 27 breeding cattle and farrow cows. Bullocks sold to £1440 for a LimX from JJ & CSA MacDonald, 103 Carnan to average £768.11 per head while heifers sold to £1060 for a LimX from the same home to average £639.79. Bullocks sold to 279p/kg for a LimX from A MacDonald, 21 Grenitote, to average 232.73p/kg and heifers sold to 258p/kg for LimX from JJ & CSA MacDonald to average 219.28p/kg. In-calf cows sold to £1200 for a BSx from A O'Henley, 393 Garrynamonie and farrow cows sold to £1130 from the same home. A good offering of quality calves sold well and to large and active ringside of buyers, resulting in vendors returning home in a jubilant mood having received values for their stock above their expectations. All other classes of stock also sold well.

LEADING LOTS & PRICES PER HEAD

BULLOCKS – AAx - £1060, Lochboisdale Hotel; £1020, 393 Garrynamonie; £945, 103 Carnan. BSx - £840, 4 Caltanish. BG - £930, 9 Kildonan. BAX - £925, £875(3), 6 Dunganichy. CHARx - £1430, £1300, 50 Balgarva; £930, 7 Frobost; £810, 12 East Gerinish & 61 Bualuchrach. LIMx - £1440, 103 Carnan; £1215, £1200, 15 Ormiclate; £1180, 103 Carnan; £1150, 11 Ormiclate; £1145, 15 Ormiclate; £1140, £1120, 103 Carnan; £1115, 11 Howmore; £1115, 344 North Boisdale; £1100, 13 Eolligarry; £1100, 103 Carnan; £1000, 100 Carnan; £1000, 342 North Boisdale; £990, 103 Carnan; £970, 344 North Boisdale; £950, 61 Bualuchrach. SIMx - £840, 6 Drimisdale. **HEIFERS** – AAx - £700, 117 Craigston, Barra. BSx - £620, 4 Howmore. BAX - £875, £850, £845(2), 6 Dunganichy. CHARx - £820, 12 East Gerinish. LIMx - £1060, £1050, 103 Carnan; £990, 15 Ormiclate; £950, 44 Liniq; £930, 103 Carnan; £910, 344 North Boisdale; £880, 336B North Boisdale; £870, 11 Howmore; £840, 101 Carnan; £840, 325 North Boisdale; £835, 101 Carnan; £820(4), 103 Carnan. SIMx - £770, 6 Drimisdale. **LEADING LOTS & PRICES PER KILO**

BULLOCKS – AAx – 262p, 259p, 6 Askernish; 256p, 117 Craigston; 256p, 6 Askernish; 253p(2), 5 Frobost. BAX – 270p(3), 264p, 262p, 6 Dunganichy. CHARx – 233p, 7 Frobost. LIMx – 279p, 278p, 21 Grenitote; 278p, 325 North Boisdale; 272p, 21 Grenitote; 271p, 1 Airdhmuillin; 270p, 5 Dunmor; 262p, 6 Dunganichy; 268p, 18 Linciate; 268p(2), Aird Illery; 267p, 7 Middlequarter; 266p, Aird Illery; 265p, 1 Airdhmuillin; 263p, 1 Ormiclate; 263p, 260p, 21 Grenitote; 260p(2), Aird Illery. SIMx – 269p(2), 265p(2), 1 Drimisdale; 263p, 10 Illery; 252p, 1 Drimisdale. **HEIFERS** – AAx – 217p, 6 Askernish; 217p, 5 Frobost. BAX – 249p (2), 238p, 233p, 224p, 223p, 6 Dunganichy. CHARx – 230p, 5 Dunmor; 225p, 222p, 12 East Gerinish. 258p, 252p, 103 Carnan; 250p, Aird Illery; 248p(2), 21 Grenitote; 248p, 5 Dunmor; 248p, 247p, Aird Illery; 246p, 100 Carnan; 244p, 21 Grenitote; 243p, 6 Dunganichy; 240p(2), 21 Grenitote. SIMx – 236p, 1 Peninerine; 230p, 6 Drimisdale. **FARROW COWS** – PER HEAD – AAx – £990, Mill Croft. BRBx - £1130, 393 Garrynamonie. HERx - £1100, 18 West Gerinish. LIMx - £1060, 1 Airdhmuillin.

SIMx - £810, 336B North Boisdale. PER KILO – BRBx – 136p, 393 Garrynamonie. LIMx – 149p, 1 Airdhmuillin. HERx – 131p, 18 West Gerinish.

United Auctions, Dalmally,

Friday November 12: 1347 sheep of all classes. Lambs sold to £111 for TexX from Stonefield Farms to average £62.31 (+£18.11). As this was the end of season sale of lambs and sheep the entry consisted mainly of small type lambs. Nevertheless, all classes of stock sold well at levels above seller's expectations. **LEADING LOTS & PRICES PER HEAD** – LAMBS – TEXx - £111, £108.50, Stonefield; £98, Maam; £96, Stonefield; £92, Kirkton; £89, Bragleenmore; £88, Blarour. CHEV - £93, Blairmore; £80, Woodlands Cottage; £77, Maam; £76, Kinlochlaich; £73, Blairmore; £73, Blackmount. CROSS - £88.50, Brackley; £77, Clachan Farms; £76, Blarachourin. MULE - £92, Stonefield Farms; £84, Ederline Estate. BF - £88, Musdale Farm; £83.50, Brackley; £81.50, Castles Estate; £82.50, Castles Estate; £78, Invernahly; £77, Maam; £77, Blarachourin; £75.50, Bragleenmore; £75.50, Blarour.

EWES – TEXx - £107, Kinlochlaich; £100, Ardchatten; £93, Kinlochlaich; £80, 4 Balure. CHEV - £81, Maam. CROSS - £70, Blairmore. MULE - £80, Stonefield Farms; £70, Ardchatten. BF - £72, Kirkton Farm; £60, Brackley; £60, Dunnans; £60, Brenchoille. **CORRECT EWES** – TEXx - £110, £108, Stonefield Farms. **RAMS** – TEX - £180, £130, Stonefield Farms. CHEV - £200, Kinlochlaich. **LEADING LOTS & PRICES PER KILO** – LAMBS – TEXx – 279p, Craig Farm; 259p, 250p, Stonefield Farms; 247p, Ederline Estate; 246p, Stonefield Farms; 235p, Kirkton; 234p, Bragleenmore. CHEV – 257p, Blarour; 244p, Woodlands Cottage; 243p, Blackmount; 240p, Antium; 238p, Blairmore; 238p, Kinlochlaich; 237p, Maam; 235p, Woodlands Cottage. CROSS – 257p, Clachan Farms; 245p, Blarachourin; 239p, Brackley. MULE – 247p, Ederline Estate; 233p, Stonefield Farms. BF – 256p, Auchlyne; 250p, Couston Farm; 246p, Brackley; 244p, Invernahly; 244p, Bragleenmore; 243p, Kilmalie; 241p, Blarmfoldach; 238p, Kiel Farm; 238p, Musdale; 233p, Castles Estate; 231p, Turnault; 230p, Blarmfoldach.



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Was that a tremor, a train or the bins? More aftershocks hit the Highlands

Roybridge was wobbled by a third earthquake in three days on Friday night, after a tremor disturbed many a night's sleep in Argyll on Tuesday.

Villagers described the latest earthquake to hit the Highlands, measured as 2.2 on the Richter scale and at a depth of 7.5km, as a 'loud bang' or a 'train passing the house'.

Glenn Ford, the British Geological Survey (BGS) seismologist on call at the time of the tremor, called it 'absolutely tiny' when compared with others around the world. The quake was 17 billion times smaller than the one that caused devastation in Japan in 2011, Glenn said, adding: 'You literally wouldn't look up from your coffee or your newspaper for an earthquake that size in California or Japan. If the roads had been busy or you were near a motorway, you'd just put it down to traffic. In



The village of Achnamara sits on the edge of Knapdale Forest at the head of Loch Sween.

UK terms, because we are a very low seismic area, we only perhaps get about 15 earthquakes a year of this size or greater, so it's quite unusual in that respect.'

As for the recent quakes in Argyll and Lochaber, Mr Ford said there had 'obviously been a little bit of stress built up in that area'.

The UK is far from the edge

of any of the tectonic plates which make up the earth's crust, and where most quakes occur. The Eurasian plate beneath the UK is moving in a westerly direction by around 10mm per year and is riddled with faults – a fracture or an area of fractures between two huge blocks of rock.

During an earthquake, there is a sudden movement between

these blocks, such as one slipping down or up against the other.

In the Highlands, one of the UK's most active areas, seismic activity is concentrated on the Strathconon, Kinlochhour, and Loch Maree faults, and, most famously, the Great Glen fault which cuts diagonally across the country from Mull and Fort William to Inverness. Activity is also centred on Comrie, the 'Shaky Toun' on the Highland Boundary Fault, where the world's first seismometer was housed.

Every year, between 200 and 300 earthquakes are detected and located in the UK by the BGS. Nearly all are micro quakes measuring under 1.9 on the Richter scale – too weak to be felt by anything other than a seismograph.

This November, 12 minor earthquakes have been recorded across Britain. Half

hit Argyll: first rumbling imperceptibly under Glenlean (0.9), then Inveraray (0.2), then Dalavich twice (0.4 and 0.9), then Barnacarry (0.5), before the strongest tremor (upgraded to a 3.4) radiated from a rupture 12km below Achnamara at 1.44am on November 16, shaking homes and waking people from Ardrishaig to Barcaldine.

Folk wondered if it was a 'really loud engine starting' or a 'washing machine gone into overdrive'. Rosemary Neagle, who lives on a farm in Kilmartin Glen near Lochgilphead, said she initially thought something had exploded in one of her sheds. She told BBC Radio's Good Morning Scotland programme: 'It kept on intensifying and the house vibrated. It rumbled on for about 10 seconds, so it was quite frightening.'

Within an hour, Roybridge

would not have registered a tiny 1.6 tremble beneath their beds, followed by an even tinier 0.9 quiver at 4.10am. Three days would pass before disaster did not strike, when an unmassive, unterrifying 2.2 shimmied the sleepy Highland village at 9.30pm on Friday November 19.

Iain MacDonald, who was staying in Roybridge at the time, said: 'It was really quite loud, like a train rumbling past the house.' Another villager described hearing a 'big rumble' before 'the whole house shook'. Someone in Spean heard a 'big banging': 'I thought it was someone's bins.'

Earthquakes measuring 3 to 3.9, such as the one in Achnamara, occur on average three times a year in the UK, while those with a magnitude of 2-2.9, such as the one in Roybridge, occur 26 times a year.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Argyll and Bute Council

PLANNING

The applications listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be viewed electronically through Argyll and Bute Council website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Having regard to Schedule 6, Part 3, s10 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, documents are only available to inspect electronically at this time. Customers requiring assistance can contact us by e-mail: planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk or tel. 01546 605518.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
21/02171/PP	Alterations to include replacement roof covering, conversion of loft space into additional living accommodation, installation of flue and septic tank. Alterations to access and parking arrangements	Bothy Cottage Kentallen, Aros, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA72 6JS
21/02197/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and formation of vehicular access	Land North East Of Keil Farm, Benderloch, Oban, Argyll And Bute
21/02088/PP	Erection of 2no wind turbines (1x 15m high to hub height, 1x 18m high to hub height), erection of control shed to facilitate electrical controls, mains electrical connection, battery energy store and stand by electric generator and associated access tracks	Torosay Castle, Craignure, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA65 6AY
21/01583/PP	Erection of cafe with associated landscaping including a viewpoint, seating, interpretive sign and play park	Land West Of Inverlurgan, Connel, Oban, Argyll And Bute
21/02216/PP	Installation of replacement septic tank and soakaway	1-3 Bracadale, Ulva, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute
21/02180/PP	Change of use of existing outbuilding to accommodate ancillary accommodation and storage area	82 Main Street, Port Charlotte, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute, PA48 7TX

Written comments can be submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> or to Argyll and Bute Council, Development Management, Kilmory Castle, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed on the Council's website. Customers are requested to use electronic communication where possible during the coronavirus pandemic as our ability to process postal mail is restricted.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
Comhairle Earra - Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES (A816 SOROBA ROAD, MCCAIG ROAD, JURA ROAD AND SHUNA TERRACE, OBAN) (TEMPORARY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT) (EXTENSION NO. 2) ORDER 2021

Argyll and Bute Council give notice that on Monday the 22nd November 2021 they made the above named Order under Section 14(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended. The effect of the Order is to temporarily restrict the waiting of vehicles, prohibit the driving of vehicles and restrict the speed of vehicles on the sections of road as detailed in the schedules below.

The restrictions, which are required because works are being or are proposed to be executed on or near those lengths of road, will be in operation from 0001 hours on Wednesday the 1st day of December 2021 until 2359 hours on Thursday the 30th day of December 2021 or until the works are complete, whichever is the earliest. The restrictions will only have effect in relation to such part or parts of the lengths of road as indicated by the appropriate traffic signs.

SCHEDULE 1 – 10MPH SPEED RESTRICTION

The entire length of McCaig Road (U117), from its junction with the Lochgilphead-Oban Road (A816) extending in a generally northerly direction to its junction with Colonsay Terrace (U099), a distance of 890 metres or thereby.

That length of the Lochgilphead to Oban Road (A816) from a point 44 metres or thereby northwest of its junction with McCaig Road (U117) extending in a south easterly direction to a point 125 metres or thereby south east of its junction with McCaig Road, a distance of 169 metres or thereby.

SCHEDULE 2 – PROHIBITION OF WAITING AT ANY TIME

On both sides of the entire length McCaig Road (U117) from its junction with the Lochgilphead-Oban Road (A816) extending in a generally northerly direction to its junction with Colonsay Terrace (U099), a distance of 890 metres or thereby.

On both sides of the entire length of Jura Road (U086) from its junction with McCaig Road (U117) extending in a north westerly direction to its junction with Shuna Terrace (U088), a distance of 120 metres or thereby.

SCHEDULE 3 – PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC

That length of Shuna Terrace (U088) from a point 30 metres or thereby northeast of the extended southeast kerbline of Jura Road (U086) extending in a north easterly direction for a distance of 75 metres or thereby (car parking area).

The Order can be viewed on the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/trafficorders
Roads & Infrastructure Services, 1A Manse Brae,
Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:
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TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

THE A85 TRUNK ROAD (OBAN) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION ON USE OF ROAD) (NO. 2) ORDER 2021

THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS give notice that they have made the above Order under sections 2(1) and (2), 4(1) and 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, temporarily prohibiting traffic on that length of the A85 Tyndrum - Oban Trunk Road from its junction with Corran Esplanade, Oban in a generally north easterly direction to the junction with Dunollie Road, Oban then in a generally southwards direction along Dunollie Road and George Street, Oban to its junction with Queens Park Place, Oban, a distance of 750 metres or thereby.

The Order is required to facilitate the Oban Reindeer Parade and Christmas Lights Switch On and will be in operation from 27th November until 28th November 2021. It is anticipated that the restrictions will be in place for approximately 20 minutes from around 17:00 hours and will only have effect in relation to such part or parts of the length of road as is indicated by the appropriate traffic signs.

The Order does not apply to vehicles being used in an emergency for fire brigade, ambulance, police or coastguard purposes or a vehicle being used for facilitating the holding of the relevant event.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

An alternative route for traffic during the prohibition is not available.

A copy of the Order and this notice will be available on the Transport Scotland website at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/road-orders/?roadorderregion=1291>

For information about roadworks on motorways and trunk roads visit www.trafficscotland.org

S R LEES

A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers Transport Scotland, Roads, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF



FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Mr & Mrs John Campbell have registered their croft known as 2 Lower Scotstown, Strontian, Ardnamurchan & Sunart on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by the 10th August 2022.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C8037.

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

John Logan has registered their Croft Glenegedale or Glenmachrie Lotts, Kildalton and Oa, on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 10th August 2022. Details of the registration may be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The Croft registration number is C3080.

Oban Camanachd Club

A.G.M

Friday 3rd
December 2021

Rockfield Centre
7.00pm start
All welcome

First Registration of Croft

Mr & Mrs C Rozga have registered their croft Ardmenish, Jura on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 15 August 2022.

Details of the registration can be found at <http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home>. The croft registration number is C8041.

www.highland.gov.uk



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>;

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
21/04606/FUL	Land 50M NW of Crestholm, East Bay, Mallaig	Erection of office
21/04839/FUL	Nether Hall, Drimarben, Fort William, PH33 6RP	Erection of garage with ancillary accommodation (family use only)
21/05303/FUL	Land 135M SW of Tigh Na Broc, Inverie, Knoydart	Erection of two cabins and associated works
21/05308/FUL	Land 90M SW of Tigh Na Broc, Inverie, Knoydart	Erection of ancillary facilities for tourist accommodation
21/05319/FUL	Marine Harvest, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Lochside, Fort William, PH33 7PT	Erection of temporary bin wash facility

Time period for comments is 14 days from the date of this notice
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Tarff Valley Ltd of Old Station Yard, Castle Douglas, Dumfries and Galloway, DG7 2AN is applying for a licence to use Coal Yard, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay PA49 7UN as an operating centre for 3 goods vehicles and 1 trailer. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Public Exhibition:

Cruachan Power Station Expansion Proposals

Dates: Tuesday 30th November and
Wednesday 1st December 2021

Location: Dalmally Community Centre &
Taynuilt Village Hall

DRAX Group is proposing an extension to its existing pumped storage power station at Cruachan, Loch Awe, Argyll & Bute.

We are holding a second round of public exhibitions to provide local residents, communities and interested parties with the opportunity to view the proposals, ask questions and leave feedback prior to submission of the application to Scottish Ministers for determination.

We will be holding two public exhibitions:

Dalmally Community Centre - Tuesday 30th November 2021 (1.30pm to 7.30pm)

Taynuilt Village Hall – Wednesday 1st December 2021 (1.30pm to 7.30pm)

Copies of the exhibition boards and other consultation information will also be available for viewing and download via the website www.cruachanexpansion.com from 29th November or they can be viewed at Cruachan Visitor Centre from 2nd December. The closing date for receipt of comments and feedback will be 17th December.

For questions about the project please contact:

Email: getintouch@cruachanexpansion.com

Telephone: 0141 352 2360

Address: Stantec UK Ltd
9 George Square, Glasgow,
G2 1DY

North Argyll Carers Centre Ltd Annual General Meeting

Friday 10th December 2021

12.00 noon

The Terrace Cafe at
Dunollie Castle & Museum

To book a place please email us
info@northargyllcarers.org.uk
or phone **01631 564422**

We look forward to seeing you

LOCHABER



Notice of

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 15th December 2021 –

@ 4pm by Zoom

Zoom details available from:

admin@lochabercab.casonline.org.uk

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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008

Notice of Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) to be published in a local newspaper under regulation 7(2)

TSL Contractors Ltd, the prospective applicant, hereby gives notice of a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) to be undertaken in advance of the submission of a planning application to Argyll and Bute Council for a prospective development comprising circa 90No. residential units, care home, nursery & commercial unit with all associated external works and landscaping at The PCC Field, Craignure, Isle of Mull, PA65 6BH.

A public event which will include a presentation of the prospective development and opportunity for public discussion with the prospective applicant is to be held at Craignure Village Hall on the 8th of December between the hours of 2-8pm.

Further information in respect of the prospective development will be available online at www.CraignureLiving.co.uk from the date of the public consultation and any persons wishing to submit comments should submit these to the prospective applicant at Craignure@360architecture.com before 29th December 2021.

Persons submitting comments in response to Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) are advised that comments submitted to the prospective applicant at this time are not representations to the planning authority; in the event that prospective applicant submits a formal application for planning permission then there would be an opportunity to submit representations to Argyll and Bute Council as the planning authority at that time.

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING DIRECTIONS ISSUED

1. A & S Firth, Rhemore,
0.036ha, Amenity Ground,
Fencing conditions
(108606)

2. A Gray, 7 Blaich,
0.17 ha, Site of a new
dwellinghouse, Fencing/
Use Conditions (110225)

Full details at www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Mrs Maureen Maitland has registered the croft known as 13 Keil, Benderloch, Ardchatten & Muckairn on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by the 18th August 2022.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C8061.

Notice of first registration of Croft

Mr Iain Dougal Maclean has registered 7 Craiginish, Lismore & Appin on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 1 August 2022. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C8013.

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DEATHS

CAMERON - Peacefully at her home on November 17, 2021, after an illness borne with great dignity and courage, Valerie (Val) Cameron, aged 80 years, Tayvallich and formerly of Bellanoch. Former proprietor of The Square Peg, Lochgilphead. Dearly loved and loving wife of Alan Cameron; much loved mother of Paul and Suzi. Cherished mother-in-law of Fergus. Adored Granny of Daniel, Samuel and the late Hannah. An esteemed and valued friend to many. A private family service will be held in Tayvallich Parish Church today, Thursday November 25, 2021, thereafter to Carsaig Cemetery. Donations may be made in Val's memory directly to the MS Centre Lochgilphead and Glenaray Ward, Mid Argyll Hospital, or via Donald MacDonald Funeral Directors.

COFFIELD - Thomas of Crianlarich, passed away, Falls of Dochart Retirement Home, Killin on Friday November 19, 2021, aged 95 years. Beloved husband of the late Louise, much loved dad to Neil, Tommy, Jane and the late Stewart, a proud Paps and father-in-law to the family. The funeral service will be held on Thursday December 2, 2021 in Killin Parish Church at 11am, thereafter to Kirkton Cemetery. Family flowers only please, donations welcomed to Falls of Dochart Retirement Home. Killin.

CURTIS - Peacefully on November 22, 2021, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Glasgow, after a short illness borne bravely, Mary Ann Curtis, nee MacGregor, in her

78th year, of 47 Glenfyne Park, Ardrishaig, loving wife of the late Charles Brian Curtis. Devoted Mother, Nana, Great Nana, Sister, Sister in Law and Mother In Law. A dear neighbour and good friend to many. She will be sorely missed by all who knew her. A private family service will take place in Ardrishaig Parish Church on Friday November 26, 2021. Additional mourners are welcome to join with the family at Achnabreac Cemetery or as the funeral cortege leaves Ardrishaig Church at approx. 12.30/12.45pm. Bright Colours preferred.

MACKENZIE - Donald. After a long illness bravely borne in Forth Valley Royal Hospital on Thursday, November 11, 2021, Donald of Ardeonaig, aged 69 years. Beloved husband of Joan much loved dad of Donna, dear brother, uncle and friend to many. Funeral service will be held on Tuesday, November 30, 2021 in Killin Parish Church at 11am, thereafter to Killin Cemetery. Family flowers only, Donations if desired to Killin Medical centre.

MACKENZIE - Fiona, of 5 Dunmar Court, Oban died peacefully after a long illness on November 17, 2021. A memorial service will be held at Dunmar Court on Saturday, November 27 at 11.00am. A cremation service will follow on Monday November 29 at Cardross Crematorium at 1.15pm. Donations in lieu of flowers to pspassociation.org.uk

MAIN - Irene and Albert Main sadly announce the passing of their much loved son Christopher. Loving brother to his sister Roslyn, brother-in-law David and uncle to Kyle,

Emma and Ally. Good friend to all who knew him. Funeral will take place at 12 noon on Friday November 26, 2021 from St. Johns Cathedral, Oban and thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery.

WINDHAM-WRIGHT - Mike, 73, passed away peacefully on November 20, 2021. Loving partner of Lin, beloved father of Thor and Oli and grandfather of Orion and Meridian. How lucky we are to have had something that makes saying goodbye so hard... A celebration of Mike's life will take place at Shore Cottage, Barcaldine, on Friday December 3, at midday where friends are invited to attend. Memorial donations may be made in Mike's name to the Beatson Cancer Charity.

IN MEMORIAM

MACCALLUM - Morag Stewart nee Nicolson taken into Gods care November 23, 2017. Precious memories of a loving Wife, devoted Mum and Mother in law.

A happy smile, kind nature, honest, loving and true. We treasure your memory all our days.

Always in our thoughts and happy together in our dreams till we meet again.

John, Mairi and Tony, Ard Craig and Allanbreck Ballachulish

MACINNES - In loving memory of a dear wife Ina, who passed away on November 28, 2010.

No tears, no verse, no words can say
How much I miss you every day.
- Love Roddy xx

MACINNES - In loving memory of a dear mum and granny who passed away on

November 28, 2010. Good times we had as a family.

Beautiful nature, heart of gold
These are the memories we will always hold.

Love and miss you always.

- Fiona, Brian and Euan xxx
Kevan, Claire and Ellie xxx

MACINTYRE - In memory of a loving dad and seanair Calum, who died on November 27, 2015.

Always remembered.

- Mark, Donna, Gary and Shannon.

MACLACHLAN - Precious memories of my dear husband Ian and our loving father and seanair who passed away on November 28, 2016.

No longer in our lives to share
But in our hearts you are always there.

- Chrissie and family, Caalmojo, Kilmory.

MACLEOD - Treasured memories of Murdo, who died November 29, 2017. Loved and missed every day.

Jane and family.

RATCLIFFE - In loving memory of Malcolm dearly loved brother brother-in-law and uncle who died accidentally 30 years ago on the November 27.

No tears no verse no words can say how much we miss you everyday.

Alyson, Ian, Robert, Alistair and families

WEATHERALL - Treasured memories of Katie, our dear mum and granny who died on November 27, 2018.

Still loved, still missed and very dear.

- Anne, Carine, Wolfgang, Andy and Jamie.

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RUGBY ROUND-UP



Oban Lorne RFC Under 16s welcomed Dalziel to Glencruitten.

Tries galore as young Oban Lorne players shine at Glencruitten

Oban Under 14s 28 Garnock Under 14s 33

On a glorious day for rugby, Oban Under 14s welcomed Garnock to Glencruitten.

As in the first meeting between these two sides, the visitors were soon into their stride.

Using their strong running centres and open side flanker to full effect, they raced into an 11-point lead through three breakaway tries, two of which were converted – three points for a try and one for a conversion at this level.

Despite this early onslaught, Oban re-grouped and demonstrated their 'never-say-die' attitude, scoring two tries through hard running centre and captain Hamish Macintyre and Louis Smyth, who made an outstanding debut at full back. The former kicked one of the conversions, making the score 7-11.

Two more converted breakaway tries extended the Garnock lead to 7-18. Yet again, Oban responded with tries from Josh Olds, Donald MacCormick, Conan Burns and Milo Llewelyn, with captain Macintyre converting two giving Oban a 21-18 lead with 20 minutes to go.

In a topsy-turvy match, Garnock kicked back into life scoring five unanswered tries making the score 21-33 with 10 minutes to go.

Oban remained defiant and showed their team spirit by scoring the final two tries of the match through Josh Olds and Donald MacCormick, one of which was converted by Macintyre.

This was a great team

effort with Scott Mcphee, Donald MacCormick and Hamish Macintyre immense in defence. The rampaging runs of Scott Murdoch and Daniel Campbell-Hill kept the Garnock defence busy throughout. Man-of-the-match Josh Olds was relentless in his defence and omnipresent in support demonstrating lines of running beyond his years.

It was great to see the teams sitting down together after the match and getting on so well after such a bruising encounter.

This team is improving all the time but there is still plenty of hard work to be done. Their next game is away to Loch Lomond on Sunday November 28.

Oban Under 16s 31 Dalziel 24

The Under 16s welcomed Dalziel to a sunny Glencruitten for a top-of-the-table clash with Oban sitting second after seven games and Dalziel sitting top after eight.

An Oban win would take the team top of the table.

Oban started the game with strong runs from centres Murray MacDonald and Thomas Jackson punching holes in the visitors' defence. This paid off when MacDonald burst through a hole and scored under the posts making it an easy conversion for James Campbell.

Dalziel gained ground through their winger before an excellent cover tackle from Oban second rower Kuba Kolodziejczyk stopped him in his tracks. But the big Dalziel pack ploughed on and made their way into the home 22.

The hosts won the ball back

but an offside penalty five metres from their try line resulted in a Dalziel try.

Oban found themselves camped in the Dalziel 22 and with pressure mounting came away with another score from prop Jack Johnston to give them a half-time 12-5 lead.

Dalziel came out the blocks quickly after the re-start and put a quick score on the board. This gave the Oban side the wake-up call required and strong carries from skipper Finlay Brown and tight head Andrew McKnight saw the home team back in control.

A third try came from scrum with scrum half Callan Taylor dotting down under the posts.

Oban received the re-start and man-of-the-match Zach Alexander ran the ball out from deep passing to centre MacDonald who ran in his second of the day.

With both teams working so well defensively, tiredness set in and a few missed tackles saw Dalziel score another try to close the gap to 26-17.

Winger James Campbell got on the score sheet to stretch the lead again, but a defiant Dalziel kept knocking at the door.

An excellent Oban defence kept them out but eventually a good line from the opposition's number eight saw him score under the posts and an easy conversion made the score 31-24.

This brought a tense and nervy end to the game but Oban saw out the last three minutes to land themselves a top of the table position with only two games left to play.

This Sunday, the Oban Under 16s are away to Strathaven.

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OT

Lessons for Oban Celtic - Les Kinvig

Les Kinvig looked back on Oban Celtic's 2021 shinty season and amongst his reflections, he highlighted some lessons the squad can learn before the game returns to a more familiar format in 2022.

Boss Dougie MacIntyre and assistant manager Les Kinvig took charge of Oban Celtic at the beginning of the 2019 shinty season. They took over from Kenny Wotherspoon who led the side into the Mowi National Division for the first time before securing a fifth place finish on 12 points. Dougie and Les maintained the improving trend, also finishing fifth but on 13 points.

An unplayable field ruled out Oban Celtic's opening and only fixture of the 2020 season at home to Skye before Covid struck, triggering a 15-month lay-off. Regionalised leagues were introduced for the delayed start to the 2021 season and it was one Oban Celtic started with optimism, as Les Kinvig recalls.

'The general consensus amongst the boys was that they were glad to be back playing shinty,' he said. 'We knew we'd face a couple of very tough opponents but viewed that as a challenge to test ourselves against top flight opposition. So we looked at it as an opportunity with our focus definitely on the cup games.'

It was a tough opening day as Kyles Athletic visited Mossfield



Les Kinvig.

in Mowi Senior League C. 'We were dreadful for the first 20-25 minutes against Kyles. We didn't have much of a pre-season, like most teams to be fair, and we thought we were prepared but we weren't. We underestimated the effects of the lockdown period. It was an eye-opener, and maybe we were a bit overawed, but that match showed us the pace of play we needed to get to.'

Oban Celtic started the season without Michael MacKinnon and Rory Bruce through injury but Allan 'Spider' Duncan took over from the injured Iain MacFarlane in goal.

A midweek league encounter at Inveraray followed when Celtic travelled with a 'thin squad' and were edged out 2-1.

The Oban side broke their duck with a 6-0 victory over Ballachulish in the

first round of the Artemis Macaulay Cup, with Duncan MacDonald grabbing a hat-trick. 'Ballachulish was a good performance,' said Les, but he admitted 'it was a tie we were expected to win'.

The win over Mowi Premiership side Glasgow Mid Argyll (GMA) was the high point of the season. 'It was a great win. We started well and GMA took the lead against the run of play. We were the better team and deserved the win.'

It could be argued that the following two matches had a detrimental effect on the remainder of the season as injury and fitness issues began to bite.

'The Oban Camanachd match was another tough test. We fared well in the first half and it was 1-1 at the interval. They kicked on in the second half though and gave us a lesson in the importance of fitness. They scored twice late on but we were lacking options when it came to our senior players.'

Oban Camanachd ran out 6-1 victors in the end but the match and schedule took its toll physically.

If the GMA victory was a season high point, the defeat to Bute in the Alvanca Balliemore Cup first round was the low-point. 'The Oban Camanachd game was on the Wednesday night and it took a lot out of us,' said Les. 'We travelled to Bute less than three days later.'

We took a squad of 15 players but some were carrying niggles and three pulled up in the warm-up. It was another lesson that two matches in such a short period of time were just too much for us.'

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The reward for beating GMA in the Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup was a trip to eventual winners Kinlochshiel. It is an afternoon Les remembers well: 'We travelled to Kinlochshiel badly affected by injuries. Three players were ruled out and our only two substitutes were carrying knocks. It was another lesson that you can't play the top sides with so many players missing and a sign that we needed to build the size of our squad. It was good to be in the Camanachd Cup quarter finals and we went out to the eventual winners with Kinlochshiel showing over the course of the season just what a good side they are.'

The season ended with a second defeat to Inveraray and an 8-0 triumph at Aberdour. 'Inveraray deserved the win,' added Les, 'but the final

score was a bit harsh on us. Aberdour will get their first experience of a full national division season next year but with no disrespect to them, we were expected to win that match.'

'The cup finals came along and the season faded away a bit for us, although we did carry on training into October. We played nine games in all over the season, but only two of them were with what I would call our settled team.'

'The biggest plus for us this season is that we managed to further develop our junior level players. At times we perhaps rushed one or two of them into the squad because of injuries and Covid and we even played some of them out of position just so we could get games played, but they did well.'

'Duncan MacDonald has come on well this season. William MacEwan, Ewen Campbell and Pierce MacBeth also did well. The way these players took their opportunities was great to see. We were able to play them without any real pressure on them. They got invaluable game time.'

'A number of boys are playing football over the winter to keep themselves fit and Neil Carmichael should have recovered from his achilles injury before the new season. That's important because he is by far our best option at full centre.'

Alan Duffy looks after the

Oban Celtic second team and Les acknowledged the efforts of his colleague's charges. 'They got eight games played and did all right. The juniors benefited from the game time and the games against Kilmallie and Lochaber were big tests. It was a higher level against these teams but the matches were keenly contested.'

As well as his many Oban Celtic duties, Les Kinvig, who has recently taken up the Camanachd Association's regional development officer's role in Argyll and Bute, also found time to referee some games throughout the season.

The final word goes to two unsung heroines and the work they do behind the scenes at Oban Celtic. Les said: 'Vivienne Duffy and Helen Pearson have been a huge help. Vivienne is our Covid co-ordinator and that has obviously been an important role this season. Her work takes a lot of pressure off the rest of us.'

'It is the same with Helen. She washes the strips for the first and second teams after every match, which is brilliant.'

Oban Celtic are yet to confirm a date for their annual general meeting but it is usually just after the Camanachd Association AGM, so a date in early December is likely.

The club have committee positions to fill and anyone interested should contact Les Kinvig or Davie Hamilton.

MacQuisten Cup Final

The MacQuisten Cup Final between Oban Camanachd Under 17s and Aberdour Under 17s at An Aird, Fort William, on Sunday November 21 was postponed as the Fife side was unable to field a team.

Oban Camanachd expressed a preference to contest the trophy, so alternative options are being explored.

Camanachd Association AGM

The Camanachd Association's annual general meeting will take place via Microsoft Teams on Friday November 26 at 7.30pm.

Members will be informed the association recorded a surplus despite a huge drop in turnover.

Finance director Daniel Palombo will tell the meeting that the Camanachd Association's 2020 annual accounts report a turnover

of £352,819, a decrease of £261,749 from 2019. However the association reported an operating surplus after tax of £16,440, down from £26,910 in 2019.

The association's reserves increased to £172,852 as at December 31 2020.

There was a drop in the number of adult female and youth registered players which can be put down to the reduced number of fixtures because of Covid restrictions. The completed fixtures record was similarly affected.

New Camanachd Association president Steven MacKenzie will use his first annual report to thank everyone involved in the effort to ensure a return to shinty in the face of a global pandemic.

There will also be thanks to all host clubs and Argyll and Bute Council for stepping up to the mark when it was decided to relocate the 2021 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup final to Mossfield, Oban.

Chief executive officer Derek Keir will speak of the

unprecedented challenges in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic which have had a significant impact on the Camanachd Association.

There are no proposed resolutions to go before the AGM.

It is recommended that individual membership fees for adult, student and youth members and the fee for club and affiliate members remain unchanged.

It is also proposed that competition fees remain unchanged whilst insurance levels return to 2020 rates.

They were discounted last season, with the option of a new enhanced personal accident cover rate for adults and youths.

Ross Brown recently stepped down from the role of Camanachd Association director whilst Lyndsay Bradley, a primary school cluster head teacher in Ayrshire, stands for re-election. A UKCC Level 1 shinty coach, Lyndsay Bradley was involved in developing shinty at all levels at Ardnamurchan and is pas-

sionate about continuing the growth in the sport. She has also coached the South Under 14 girls for the past few years and coached the Scotland Under 18s Ladies team for the two previous seasons.

The Camanachd Association is a not-for-profit member-led organisation led by a board elected at the annual general meeting by member clubs and associations.

The 2021 Camanachd Association board comprised of: Steven MacKenzie, president; Burton Morrison, competitions; Lyndsay Bradley, officials; Kirsty Deans, volunteering, safeguarding and UK Anti-Doping; Willie MacDonald, Youth Player Pathway; John Finlayson, communications and facilities - Highland; Roddy McCuish, communications and facilities - West and Central; Daniel Palombo, finance; Ross Brown, coaching and development - equality and inclusion; John MacKenzie, chieftain, and Richard Gall, vice chieftain.

This year's AGM will be followed by a short session to discuss the 2022 shinty season, the new Camanachd Association Strategy and how everyone can work together to ensure shinty continues to progress.

Newtonmore begin manager search

Newtonmore have started looking for a new first team manager following Orsten Gardner's decision to stand down. Orsten took over from PJ MacKintosh at the end of the 2019 season. The club hopes to appoint a successor at next month's annual general meeting.

Col Glen fundraiser

Col Glen are taking on a challenge to collectively run 2,000km to boost club funds.

The team has an intensive pre-season plan which requires training facilities and

equipment as well as travel to and from events.

In an effort to raise funds for this, the players hope to run 2,000km as a team before the end of 2021.

Anyone wishing to donate can do so via a crowd funding page with details on the Col Glen Shinty Club Facebook page. Col Glen will hold its annual general meeting at Colintrave Village Hall on Friday November 26 at 7pm.

Ballachulish raise charity funds

Ballachulish Shinty Club members are taking part in 'Movember' to raise money for Prostate Cancer Research.

One in eight males in the UK will be diagnosed with prostate cancer but early detection means a 98 per cent chance of survival beyond five years. Late detection offers only a 26 per cent chance of survival over the same timeframe.

Details of how to donate can be found on the Ballachulish club's Facebook page.



The keen young rugby players who took part in the Dalriada tournament at Banavie. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

Pupils throw themselves into rugby finale

On a glorious autumnal afternoon in Fort William, Lochaber Rugby club hosted the final Dalriada tournament of the year with a fantastic turnout of players from Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Oban, Taynuilt, Mull and Fort William.

There was some fantastic rugby on display from both age groups with great running and cracking tackles coupled with loads of energy and enthusiasm. In the P4/5 age group, Mid Argyll were the team to beat and produced amazing play to remain undefeated on the day. This means Mid Argyll win the the autumn series for the P4/5 group after being pushed all the way by Kintyre

who finish in second. Special mentions to Etive Vikings and Mull who continue to improve game by game.

In the P6/7 games, Kintyre were going for the clean sweep at this age group. Organisers were delighted to see Mull compete in this category for the first time this season and they will have learnt a lot from this outing. The Lochaber team were keen to win their home tournament and defended with real vigour in every game with some fantastic tackling. It was their defensive efforts which laid the foundation for their victory, with visiting teams struggling to match their physicality, and they didn't lose a game to secure victory.

Kintyre may have lost the battle, but they won the war and were deserved winners of the autumn series by being consistent over the four festivals. The next festival takes place in March 2022 when the focus switches to the secondary schools.

This Thursday, there is a girls' development day at Lochgilphead Joint Campus from noon until 3pm with Lochgilphead High School hosting Tobermory high, Oban high and Islay high schools to play games at Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18 in the first event between the schools.

The hope is that each school/club will host an event over the coming months.



Action from an Oban Lorne v Lochaber match.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

More photographs at www.obantimes.co.uk

Good things come in threes for Saints

Continued from page 44.

on the half hour mark when the visitors capitalised on cheaply conceded Saints possession.

Jack Halley's shot was too powerful for Graham Douglas to hold and luck deserted the Saints number one when his parry fell into the path of Ryan McGregor for a simple finish.

Westerlands got their noses in front with 20 minutes remaining from a tempting Kristian Gega free-kick. Gega's pinpoint delivery from the left was met perfectly by Calum Windram whose classic downward header from two yards out gave Graham Douglas no chance.

There was a large slice of good fortune surrounding Saints' equaliser in the 77th minute. Daniel MacDonald got his right hand to a long range Gavin Forgive shot but only succeeded in pushing the ball back towards his own goal-line.

The young keeper scrambled back to claw the ball out from between the posts, however, despite the Westerlands protests, referee Doolan ruled the ball had crossed the line.

Saints hit the front with seven minutes remaining when Matty Kelly picked out Craig MacEwan after a strong cross-field run from right to left. MacEwan held the ball up well before slipping a perfectly

weighted pass into the path of Myles McAuley, who thumped the ball into the net from 12 yards.

Saints' lead lasted just three minutes before a set-piece once again proved to be Saints' undoing. Kristian Gega's delivery from the right this time found Calum McCrossan who powered a header from nine yards past a rooted Graham Douglas.

In the second of the three additional minutes, David Beaton controlled a Craig MacEwan flick-on from a Myles McAuley throw-in on the right and thumped the ball into the side netting from a tight angle before Mr Doolan, who had a good match, blew for full time and signalled for a penalty shoot-out.

Steven MacLeod strode up purposefully for the first kick which Daniel MacDonald saved well low to his right. Graham Douglas, however, immediately levelled things up when he dropped to his left to save Ryan McGregor's effort.

Myles McAuley took Saints' second penalty but failed to hit the target leaving the score level at 0 - 0. Westerlands skipper Calum Windram got the scoring under way with Dene Cassells levelling immediately for Saints.

Graham Douglas flung himself to his right to push away

Kristian Gega's strike and regain the initiative for his side and Fraser MacFarlane made no mistake with his attempt before Graham Douglas made it 'match point' to Saints with his third save, this time foiling Fraser Gordon.

Craig MacEwan held his nerve and successfully converted his spot kick to send his side into the fourth round.

This Saturday, November 27, Saints resume their search for their first home league points of the season when they welcome Uddingston Anvil to Glencruitten in the Central Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division.

Match report by
Derek Black.

Youth results and fixtures

Last Sunday's results:

The Under 13s drew 4-4 with Charlie Miller FA. Scoring for Saints were Kuba Ryszka, Donald Campbell, 2, and Scott Campbell.

The Under 15s drew 1-1 with Rossvale. Rhys Millar scored for Saints.

Fixtures: Sunday November 28: Under 13s v Drumsagard; Under 15s v Bothwell Blue Star and Knightswood v Under 16s.

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Good things come in threes for Saints

Oban Saints	3
Westerlands	3
West of Scotland Amateur Cup third round	

Oban Saints win 3-1 on penalties

FOOTBALL

They say 'good things come in threes' and that was the case for Oban Saints at the weekend.

Three penalty shoot-out saves from Saints goalkeeper Graham 'Sugar' Douglas saw the Oban side win their round three West of Scotland Cup tie at Glencruitten on Saturday after three goals each from the hosts and Caledonian League visitors Westerlands saw the lead change hands three times during the regulation 90 minutes.

After a goal-less first half, the Glencruitten faithful who had braved the heavy rain were treated to six goals in a thrilling second period before the added bonus of a nerve jangling penalty shoot-out.

Attacking the railway line end in the first half, Saints were moving the ball around well enough but without the necessary urgency to trouble the Westerlands back four.

The visitors took route one for their first serious attack which came in the 22nd minute from a Fraser Russell goal kick. The big central defender's long kick

was flicked on by Scott McFarlane into the path of Brian Maybin, who found his route into the Saints box blocked by Cammy Hill.

The loose ball was keenly contested by Jack Halley and Scott Maitland with referee Robert Doolan penalising Saints' left full back. Scott McFarlane curled the resulting free-kick high over Graham Douglas's crossbar.

The goal-less first half was no indication of the goal avalanche which was to follow in the second period which was only 60 seconds old when it produced the first on target effort of the match. Ewan Dempster made good progress on the Westerlands left and picked out Jack Halley in the middle for a shot from 18 yards which Graham Douglas held comfortably.

The deadlock was broken after 55 minutes when Scott Maitland and Craig MacEwan combined well on the left for MacEwan to pick out Matty Kelly's supporting run through the middle. Kelly was at full stretch to make a solid connection with MacEwan's cross sending the ball into the top corner past Daniel MacDonald's right hand.

Kyle Cooper's 57th minute left foot effort from the edge of the Westerlands box curled over the crossbar as Saints stepped up their search for a second goal.

The home side's good start to the second half was undone

Continued on page 43.

Dubai delight as Bob goes fourth

Oban's Robert MacIntyre rounded off his golfing year in style with a brilliant fourth place finish at the season-ending DP World Tour Championship in Dubai on Sunday.

His birdie on the final hole not only sealed a fine finish but moved him up to ninth place in the final Race To Dubai standings and secured him a place in the 2022 US Open, meaning he has now qualified to play in all four majors next season.

After showing signs of a return to form in his previous tournament, Robert went into the Rolex series event with a renewed confidence that was evident in a sparkling opening round of 68.

He followed that with a solid 69 on Friday to leave himself well placed going into the weekend.

Saturday then saw a masterclass in attacking golf with Bob firing six birdies and an eagle in a 67 which left him two shots back from leader Rory McIlroy going into the final round.

Going out in the penultimate group on Sunday, it was obvious within the first few holes that Bob was going to have to dig deep to contend. While his overall game was a bit scratchy, brilliant scrambling and putting kept him in contention and when he rolled in a birdie putt on the 11th green to move just one shot behind McIlroy, his second tour win looked a



Robert MacIntyre, who rounded off his golfing year in style, finishing the season-ending DP World Tour Championship in Dubai in fourth place.

realistic possibility.

Unfortunately, any prospect of victory disappeared at the 12th hole when an errant tee shot was cruelly punished when his ball came to rest against an exposed tree root. The resultant double bogey saw Bob briefly lose composure and another bogey followed at the 13th.

Suddenly three-and-a-half days of brilliant golf was in danger of being undone on the back nine on Sunday.

What followed was probably the gutsiest five holes of his professional career so far, with

Bob dusting himself down and firing back-to-back birdies at 15 and 16 before rounding things off with a tap-in birdie on the final hole to secure fourth place behind eventual winner and world number two Collin Morikawa.

Robert's result in Dubai caps off another fine season on tour.

The highlights were undoubtedly his eighth place finish at the Open, 12th place at the Masters as well as making the cut in the two other Majors, the US Open and US PGA Championship.

Add in another four top 10

finishes, solid performances in WGC events in addition to a spell playing on the PGA tour and Robert has every right to look back with immense pride on 2021 and look forward to 2022 with renewed confidence and belief.



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The Oban Times: 95p



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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 25 November, 2021** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

25	0253 1.7 0838 3.5 TH 1519 2.1 2107 3.1	27	0438 1.9 1030 3.2 SA 1756 2.2 C 2348 2.9	29	0147 3.0 0654 1.8 M 1342 3.4 2020 1.8	1	0317 3.4 0857 1.3 W 1523 3.8 2152 1.2
26	0340 1.8 0925 3.3 F 1629 2.2 2206 3.0	28	0545 1.9 1204 3.2 SU 1917 2.0	30	0237 3.2 0758 1.6 TU 1438 3.6 2109 1.5	2	0354 3.7 0950 1.0 TH 1605 4.0 2233 1.0

OBAN WEATHER

Thursday

Light cloud and moderate breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 6°C.

Friday

Light rain showers and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 4°C to 7°C.

Saturday

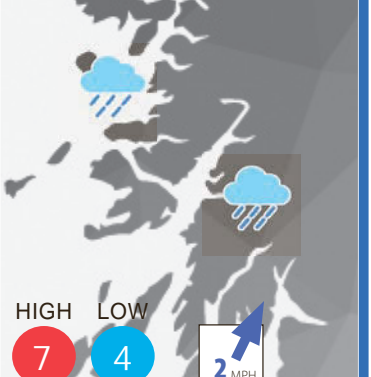
Sunny intervals and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 2°C to 5°C.

Sunday

Light cloud and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 4°C to 6°C.

FRIDAY FORECAST

Ardrisaigh	-5.35
Campbeltown	-5.30
Crinan	-0.47
Islay Port Ellen	2.00
Lochboisdale	+0.30
Mallaig	+0.25
Portree	+0.55
Tobermory	+0.16
Dover	+5.30



HIGH 7 LOW 4 2 MPH

LOCHABER TIMES

& OBAN TIMES

No 8591

Thursday 25 November, 2021

www.lochabertimes.co.uk

95p

Lochaber Rugby Club hosts final festival of the year

Lochaber Ideas Week round-up - see inside



OH YES HE HAS!



● COUNCILLOR SWAPS LOCAL DEMOCRACY DRAMATICS FOR PANTO

Since announcing his retirement from the dramatics of local democracy, Councillor Andrew Baxter has been answering a new calling. He is taking on the role of pantomime dame in Spotlight Musical Theatre Group's production of Treasure Island to be staged at the Corran Halls, Oban, from December 2-4. Read full story on page 7. Photograph: Debbie Day/Spotlight Musical Theatre Group.

Fort cinema boss fumes over cancelled school bookings

Highland Cinema owner Angus MacDonald has been left furious this week after a decision to cancel around £10,000 in festive season bookings for local school children in the wake of Covid concerns.

Speaking to the Lochaber Times, Mr MacDonald said: 'We've just had thousands of pounds-worth worth of Christmas bookings from primary school groups cancelled by Highland Council.'

'Kids face the front with masks on when at the cinema, so what is the difference between classes and a screen? Last year they all came and that was prior to jabs.'

'December is the only month from the end of October until Easter that we - indeed all Highland hospitality - have a chance of breaking even.'

Mr MacDonald has now taken this issue up with constituency MSP Kate Forbes, asking her to look into the matter.

'The problems of trying to get through to speak to the right person at the council have been extraordinary,' he added.

'As far as I am aware only Highland Council is doing this and they just don't seem to have considered the implications for businesses like ours. It just seems to be box ticking

Continued on page 10.

SPOTLIGHT
musical theatre group

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A BEN CROCKER PANTOMIME

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Your Fort William and Ardnamurchan by-election candidates

In our special by-election round-up of candidates this week, the seven electoral hopefuls for Highland Council Ward 21 - Fort William and Ardnamurchan - explain why people should cast their votes for them on December 2. Voting will take place on Thursday December 2, with the electronic count taking place the following day in the ward. Ward 21 is a four-member ward and the successful candidate will join fellow ward members, Councillors Blair Allan, SNP; Andrew Baxter, Scottish Conservative and Unionist, and Niall MacLean, SNP.

Dr Kate Willis, Scottish Green Party.

Dr Kate Willis is the first Scottish Green candidate to stand in council elections in Lochaber. She has lived in the Highlands for nearly 20 years, working as a marine ecologist, a wildlife tour guide and currently works for Lochaber Environmental Group.

Many in the area will know Dr Willis from the work she is doing to deliver HIBIKE, the Fort William ebike share scheme. Kate has also campaigned for many years for government action on the climate and ecological crises and is passionate about rewilding and local food production.

Dr Willis said: 'We need to think longer-term and do everything we can to ensure



the right decisions are made in the coming months and years to deliver a brighter future.

'As a Green councillor, I would work with residents and communities helping to improve democratic systems of local governance, building inclusive, resilient communities with affordable warm homes for all and improved active travel infrastructure and public transport.'



Sarah Fanet, Scottish National Party.

It is my privilege to stand at this election, as the SNP candidate.

I want to put people first and listen to you, your communities and local groups.

Lochaber has the potential to be the best place to live in Scotland and we need councillors who will put your priorities and your well-being first when representing you in Inverness. I want to support our local businesses, ensure that tourism is well managed and keeps our land and natural assets sustainable.

I want to protect and improve services for our communities and improve access to affordable, warm and energy efficient homes.

I want to support our children in their education. Highland Council needs to understand that our schools have specific

needs, often because of their size and location. Children need stability in their learning and deserve the same learning opportunities as elsewhere.



Joanne Matheson, Independent.

I have already stated ('Don't vote for me' - Lochaber Times, November 18) that I don't want your vote on this occasion because I am unable to give at least 20 hours a week, which I think the job needs, way above the statutory minimum requirement.

Obviously if you think I'm the best candidate - thank you - and if elected I will do everything I can to make that time available.

It is not acceptable that Inverness gets expensive non-essential 'installations' when Fort William is virtually impassable in summer and grid-locked when there's an accident. It is not acceptable that Inverness treats the Corran Ferry as an income stream, repeatedly increasing fares and keeping custom away from our businesses.

Just as small schools need proportionally more teachers, our sparsely populated areas need a louder voice, but the current system, based purely on population numbers, doesn't allow that.

I therefore ask that you put party politics to one side and choose the candidate you believe will give the necessary time and effort to speaking up for our area.



Mark Drayton

Our suicide rate here is high, even by Scottish standards. And that's just the tip of an iceberg of mental health problems. Empowered people don't take their own lives. Disempowerment, disagency and disillusion are, at present, just as great and consequential an 'issue of the human condition' as climate volatility and it's impossible to imagine our solving the latter without facing the former.

Yet people have prevailed in far worse circumstances. Speaking in 1956, Martin Luther King proclaimed that: 'It's not only rights that we are seeking. We not only have the right to be free, we have a duty to be free. And when you see freedom in sense of duty, it becomes greater than seeing it in terms of right, your right to be free. You have a duty to be free.'

Council taxpayers deserve a bill of rights. And public service vouchers can and should replace the seductive but ultimately demeaning practice of grant-chasing in service provision, treating symptoms instead of causes.



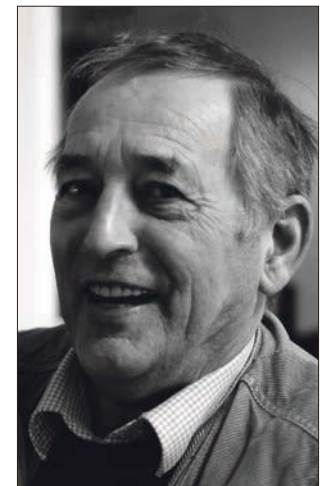
Ruraidh Stewart, Scottish Conservative and Unionist.

Having grown up in the West Highlands and having recently returned from university to run the family croft, I've seen

the same Inverness-obsessed council which has forgotten about the rural Highlands. I've had enough and want to be your strong voice.

You just need to look at what happened with the Levelling Up Fund to see that the 'Independent'/Lib Dem council couldn't care less about Lochaber. Inverness got £20m, but not a single bid was submitted for our area.

Last month, every SNP, Lib Dem and so-called 'Independent' Lochaber councillor voted to increase Corran Ferry fares by up to 43 per cent. At that vote, only the Scottish Conservatives came together to try halt the unjustifiable price hike. It's time we stop electing people who block progress. Look at the record and I hope you can support my campaign against the Inverness machine.



Roger Liley, Scottish Liberal Democrats.

In Lochaber, we are blessed with some of the most beautiful scenery in the Highlands, but that won't buy a new winter coat.

We are in real need of diverse employment, affordable housing for families and young people and investment in our infrastructure.

For me, the absolute priority

Continued on page 10.

OBAN SCOTLAND IN ONE PLACE

"Thanks to everyone who is already getting behind the bid for city status. Cities come in all shapes and sizes. Bidding for city status is one step in ensuring that Oban has as much chance for a successful future as other parts of Scotland. It's about creating opportunities for investment to progress things that matter to local people."

Councillor Robin Currie,
Leader of Argyll and Bute Council

Help attract what our future needs.

Back the city status bid.

Back Oban city status

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/obancity

Pub buyout appeal sma

A crowdfunder to raise £40,000 towards the community buyout of The Old Forge pub in Knoydart had surpassed its target only five days after being launched.

The Old Forge Community Benefit Society Limited launched the appeal on Thursday November 18 and the total had already reached £55,820 by Tuesday morning.

Mainland Britain's Remotest Pub (Guinness World Records) was put up for sale in January and residents came together

to discuss the possibility of a community buyout to return the pub to being a village hub.

Fundraising started in the summer, with the society securing vital capital through a community share offer and successful applications to the Scottish Land Fund and the Community Ownership Fund.

Isla Miller, management committee member, said: 'The crowdfunder is the last piece of the puzzle in our complex fundraising strategy. With the majority of the capital that we

need now secured, we were able to crunch the numbers to work out our shortfall and that's where crowdfunding comes in to play.'

The crowdfund campaign aimed to raise the £40,000 in 30 days but the target had already been smashed by Monday. A £60,000 stretch target has now been implemented and the hope is funds secured through this will go towards upgrades to the bar area once the pub has been secured by the community.

Ramblers launch legal fight over estate footpath access



Full steam ahead for lights thanks to Cruise Lochaber

Organisers of the Fort William Festive Fund were delighted when they saw 'one ship come sailing in', adding £750 to their Christmas lights funding target. Owners of Cruise Lochaber, Neil Cameron and Colin Whitehead, had been watching online donations mount up over the months and stepped in on the eve of its closure with a donation of £750 to fulfil the dream of raising £8,000. Members of the committee, suitably decked with Christmas tinsel, visited the bright orange 'Elsie', which ploughs up and down the Loch throughout the year for tourist trips, parties and functions, to thank Neil and Colin in person. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

Ramblers Scotland has embarked on what it is calling a 'landmark' court battle over blocked access to a footpath on Ardnamurchan Estate.

The charity, which says it faces legal costs of up to £82,000 in its fight over the Glenborrodale to Acharacle path, has launched a crowd-funder appeal to support its work on this and other legal cases.

The path is on the Ardnamurchan peninsula and offers stunning views of Loch Sunart. It is described as being of great value to the community and as a strategic long-distance trail.

The case follows several complaints about locked gates at the estate in recent years. In 2019, two ramblers were reported for aggravated trespass while walking on the path, which is near their Glenborrodale home.

A sheriff court last week granted Ramblers Scotland permission to join The Highland Council in opposing a bid by Woodland Renewables to use section 28 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to remove access rights from the affected part of the Ardnamurchan Estate.

Ramblers Scotland director Brendan Paddy said the charity always viewed legal action as a last resort.

'We haven't entered an access case of this type in well over a decade, particularly as legal action can be so costly,' he said.

'However, this is a landmark legal case featuring an historic and important path. If we don't fight to save the route, it'll be a significant blow to our hard-won access rights and walkers

'I hope lovers of the outdoors will consider donating to support our work and deliver a resounding message that people in Scotland believe our access rights are worth fighting for.'



Locked gates on Ardnamurchan Estate.

will be banned from parts of this beautiful trail forever.

'I hope lovers of the outdoors will consider donating to support our work and deliver a resounding message that people in Scotland believe our access rights are worth fighting for.'

The Highland Council told the Lochaber Times: 'The

council is opposing the application made under section 28 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The council intends to raise a separate action to have a route through the site that is subject to the section 28 application declared a public right of way.'

This route has been used by

generations of walkers before the area was more recently developed as a wood yard, allegedly on the understanding access rights would be maintained.

All parties are due back in court online for the next hearing at the beginning of February.

After being interviewed and a report sent to the procurator fiscal, no further action was taken against the two walkers who were reported for alleged aggravated trespass but Ramblers Scotland branded the case 'unprecedented and worrying'.

shes target in five days

Crowdfunder supporters will have the chance to have their name engraved in the new bar-top which will be made from local timber and constructed by local craftsmakers. Other rewards include discount loyalty cards, special edition merchandise and virtual pub nights where punters tune in live to the Forge bar.

'We spent a long time coming up with a range of rewards to suit every taste and budget,' said Jackie Robertson, part of the team working on the

crowdfunder. 'Originally, we thought we would need to crowdfund for half the money needed to buy the Old Forge, which was a daunting prospect, but we have been really lucky to be successful in our grant applications and the community share offer. With money in the bank already, we need this last part for us to be able to carry out the work needed to make the building last for future generations.'

With the majority of funds

secured, the society is in the process of submitting a formal offer to the seller. If successful, the Community Benefit Society structure ensures that locals and supporters will be in control of the pub's future with businesses operations defined with community benefit at the forefront. Profits are reinvested back in to the business and other local projects, not distributed amongst shareholders. The crowdfunder can be viewed at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/the-old-forge-knoydart.

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Nevis Hill Walking Club,
Saturday November 27, Glen
Roy – Carn Bhrunachain
(723m, Simm); Carn Dearg
(834m, Corbett); Creag
Tharsuinn (719m, Graham
Top)

With the recent wet weather,
Dog Falls and the River
Roy are likely to be rather
spectacular. Opportunity to
complete a slightly shorter
route by omitting Creag
Tharsuinn.

Full route is 14km, 670m
ascent or 10km, 647m ascent.

For more detail of the route
please visit our website www.nevishillwalking.club or
the Nevis Hillwalking Club
Facebook page.

Please note that walks may
change at short notice due
to conditions on the day and
Covid restrictions.

If you are a keen hill walker
and want to know more about
our club, participate in walks
or are interested in becoming
a member, please contact us at
enquiries@nevishillwalking.club.

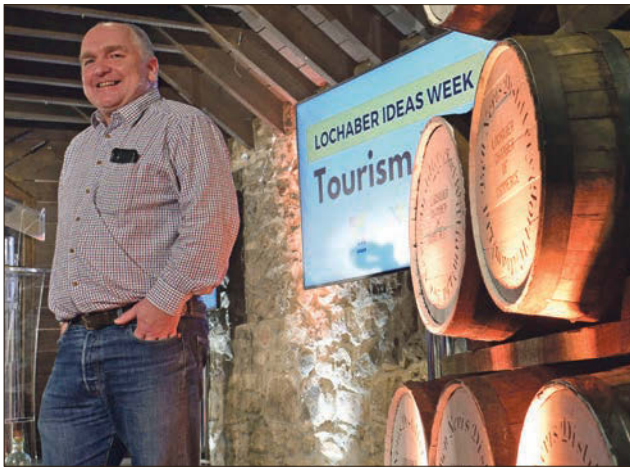
Chamber boss says bike event is 'amazing economic opportunity'

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

Lochaber Chamber of
Commerce boss Frazer
Coupland has said that while
hosting mountain bike races as
part of the 2023 UCI Cycling
World Championships would
bring challenges concerning
enough accommodation and
transport availability, it would
still be an amazing economic
opportunity for Fort William
and the wider area.

Mr Coupland was addressing
a session comprising part of last
Thursday's Tourism Day – part
of the chamber's Ideas Week
staged at Ben Nevis Distillery
(see P11-13 for more).

The gathering, including
many local accommodation
providers, had just heard a
talk from Gavin Ross, of the
Scottish Government's major
events department.



Lochaber Chamber of
Commerce Chief Executive
Frazer Coupland at
Thursday's Tourism Day.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson

mountain biking cross-coun-
try, downhill, marathon and
cross-country eliminator
competitions.

Mr Coupland told the audi-
ence hopes were high that the
Nevis Range mountain resort
outside Fort William would
be named as the venue for the
mountain bike downhill com-
petitions, saying there wasn't a
better quality venue anywhere
else in Scotland.

But he also flagged up
how busy Fort William and
Lochaber are in August gener-
ally and that such a massive
event taking place at Fort
William would not be without
its challenges.

'I think we are going to be
really, really busy - in fact much
busier than in 2007 when we
hosted the world championship
cross country event,' he said.

'Infrastructure like car
parking, access, travel - there
are a lot of things we will have
to overcome in this area as a
destination but it is a great
opportunity to look at active
travel networks, working with
the likes of Transport Scotland
making sure trains arrive at

appropriate times to get people
in and out of the area.

'These are all conversations in
the very early stages but which
are going to ramp up over the
next 18 months. As chamber
members we will be trying to
put out as much information
as we speak to accommodation
providers. But it will be a lot
easier when it is announced.'

One local accommodation
provider said her business was
already taking bookings for
2023 and while she would be
delighted to help provide ac-
commodation for those taking
part or visiting for the world
championships, with every few
months that passed without
knowing if Lochaber would
be involved, saw that window
for providing accommodation
getting smaller and smaller.

'I know there's obviously lots
of planning that has to go into
something like this, but as a
provider the sooner we know
the easier it is to be hospitable,'
she said.

Closing the session, Mr
Coupland said while there
were lots of challenges and
issues to deal with, it was still
'tremendously exciting' and
added: 'Personally, I think this
would be an amazing economic
opportunity for the town but
it will present some challenges
along the way.'

Scotland was announced
as the host country for the
first UCI Cycling World
Championships back in 2019
and since then both Glasgow
and Dumfries and Galloway
have been named as venues
for some of the 13 world
championship disciplines that

will be contested around the
nation over the event's 10 days
in August 2023.

With more than 2,600 com-
petitors from around 120 coun-
tries, an expected one million
spectators and more than one
billion viewers worldwide, the
Cycling Worlds will be one of
the top 10 sporting events on
the planet.

Glasgow will host champion-
ships for BMX, Road Cycling,
Track Cycling and Track Para-
Cycling amongst others, while
Dumfries and Galloway will be
home to the Para-cycling Road
championships.

Venues for the remaining four
disciplines will be announced
over the coming months,
including championships for

Support for tenants with Covid-19 rent arrears at risk of homelessness

Help is on hand for
Lochaber tenants in social
housing and the private sector
who are at risk of becoming
homeless after falling behind
with rent payments during the
pandemic.

The Tenant Grant Fund will
help tenants who have strug-
gled financially as a direct re-
sult of the pandemic, allowing
them to reduce or pay off any
rent arrears they have built up.

The grants do not have to
be repaid and are available to
tenants in council, housing
association or privately rented
accommodation.

Highland Council has
received an allocation of
£296,000 from the Scottish
Government which is only
available until March 31, 2022.

The scheme is designed to be
flexible but there is an eligibil-

ity criteria set by the Scottish
Government:

- The grants are limited to helping with rent arrears that built up between March 23, 2020 and August 9, 2021
- Grants can be used to make a full or partial payment of arrears depending on individual circumstances
- Grants will be targeted towards current tenants who are at risk of becoming homeless and do not have any other way of clearing the arrears
- Payments will be made to landlords rather than tenants on the strict condition that the payment will be used to credit the tenant's rent account, and that any ongoing proceedings to end the tenancy will be ceased.

Leader of the Highland
Council, Councillor Margaret

Davidson said: 'We are well
aware of the financial impact
of the Covid-19 pandemic
and the support offered by the
council has been essential in
sustaining tenancies.'

'We are now in a position to
consider inquiries relating to
the Tenant Grant Fund. Initial
inquiries can be made to hous-
ing.policyteam@highland.gov.
uk by tenants, landlords or
third party organisations that
are supporting either a tenant
or landlord.'

'Highland looks forward
to working with tenants and
landlords to support them at
this difficult time.'

For advice and assistance,
Highland Council recom-
mends contacting landlords
or the Citizens Advice Bureau
or Highland Council Welfare
Support Team.



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Smelter owner dodges land transfer question

It is almost exactly five years to the day since GFG Alliance took ownership of Lochaber smelter, two nearby hydro plants and around 166,000 acres of accompanying estate lands.

But despite part of the deal struck with the Scottish Government, in return for a power guarantee, being an undertaking on community transfer of a significant portion of the estate lands, little has happened.

And just days after the Scottish Government revealed the guarantee could be worth up to a staggering £586m of taxpayers' cash, the company is still side-stepping the issue of community land transfer.

Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie Halcro Johnston, the Scottish Conservative Shadow Minister for Business, called the guarantee an 'astonishing amount of public money'.

However, the Lochaber Times understands that the 25-

year power guarantee - which would have been available to any successful bidder - was to overcome uncertainty over the condition of the rock-hewn hydro tunnel which hadn't been opened since 1984. To remove that uncertainty and encourage parties to tender, the guarantee was given in case the successful bidder was forced to rely on the National Grid for electricity - a scenario which has not arisen so far, five years into the 25-year period.

But despite the passing of the five-year anniversary of its deal this month, when asked when the East Lochaber Community Trust (ECLT) - which wanted to buy estate lands at the time of the 2016 sale by previous owner Rio Tinto - could expect some decisive action on community land transfer, GFG Alliance was less than forthcoming.

GFG Alliance's only comment was that the smelter is a profitable operation and that it

is committed to investing for the future in a new recycling and aluminium billet plant on the site and that, thanks to its hydro-electric facility integrated with the wider estate, the smelter already produces some of the lowest carbon aluminium on the market.

Pressed a second time about land transfer, a company spokesman said: 'We'll leave it at the overall statement.'

John Hutchison, chairman of the ELCT, said he was surprised by the comments from GFG. 'We are currently engaged with them and had agreed that in the event of any press interest we would report that discussions are ongoing,' Mr Hutchison told the Lochaber Times.

'Because the water rights go with the smelter, the community owning the land represents no threat whatsoever, removes uncertainty and would mean that decisions would be taken by folk who live here.'



Delights await at the West End

While the centre of Fort William's High Street will be bustling with excitement during the Christmas Festival, no-one should forget to venture along to the West End where many more delights await.

Members of the Crafternoon Club based in the new Lochaber Hope building have set up a crochet Christmas tree, its arms

hanging with hand-knitted and crochet crafts which would make the ideal present for someone special.

Traditional baby clothes, blankets, dresses, a pink bunny, decorated bottle lights, even small boxes of sweets, are all on sale to help raise funds for Lochaber Hope. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.



CHRISTMAS DEALS FROM US TO THE PEOPLE OF OBAN

TAKEAWAY DEALS	SIT IN PARTY DEALS	SIT IN CURRY DEALS
<p>Deal 1 Any 9" Pizza, 1 Peri Chicken Wrap, 1 Fries, 1 Mozzarella Sticks, 2 Cans of Pepsi £11.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 1 Any Chicken Meal £5.50</p>	<p>Curry Deal for 1 Veg Pakora, Chicken Curry, Korma OR Bhoona, Rice OR Nan £9.99</p>
<p>Deal 2 Any 2 9" Pizzas, 5 Peri Peri Wings or Strips, 1 Peri Peri Chicken Rice Box, 2 Fries, 2 Cans of Pepsi £19.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 2 Any 2 Chicken Meals £9.99</p>	<p>Curry Deal for 2 Mixed Pakora, Any 2 Chicken Curries, 1 Rice, 1 Plain or Garlic Nan £16.99 (Lamb +£1 per dish)</p>
<p>Deal 3 1 Full Peri Peri Chicken, Any 12" Pizza, 5 Fried Strips or Wings, 4 Peri Peri Chicken Thigh, Peri Chips, Mozzarella Sticks and 2 x 2L Pepsi £19.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 3 Any 9" Pizza + Any 2 Chicken Meals £14.99</p>	<p>Curry Deal for 3 Large Mixed Pakora, Any 3 Chicken Curries, 3 Rice and 1 Plain or Garlic Nan £26.99 (Lamb +£1 per dish)</p>
<p>Deal 4 Any 2 12" Pizzas, 1 Peri Peri infused Donner Kebab, 3 Fried Drumsticks, 2 x Potato Wedges and 2 Cans of Pepsi £21.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 4 Any 2 9" Pizzas + Any 2 Chicken Meals £19.99</p>	<p>Curry Deal for 4 Large Mixed Starter Plate, Any 4 Chicken Curries, 2 Rice & 2 Plain or Garlic Nan, and 4 Chocolate Fudge Cake Slices £39.99</p>
<p>Deal 5 9" Pizza, 5 Peri Peri Strips and 5 Wings, Peri Chicken Quesadilla, 2 x Onion Rings, 2 x Fries, 2 x Chicken Nuggets, 2 x 500ml Pepsi £23.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 6 Any 2 12" Pizzas, Any 2 Chicken Meals + 2 Peri Fries £26.99</p>	<p>KIDS DEALS Kids Party Deal 1 Chips, Chicken Nuggets, Onion Rings & Mozzarella Sticks with a Small Ice Cream Shake £5.99</p>
<p>Deal 6 Peri Peri Chicken Burger, Fried Chicken Burger, 5 Peri Peri Wings or Strips, 1 Chicken Quesadilla or Burrito, 1 Peri Chicken Rice Box, 2 Fries, 2 Peri Chips, 2 Spicy Rice, 2 x 2L Pepsi £23.99</p>	<p>Party Deal for 8 Full Peri Peri Chicken, Any 2 12" Pizzas, Any 2 Chicken Meals + Any 2 Sides £34.99</p>	<p>Kids Party Deal 2 Any Chicken, Beef or Cheese Burger with Chips and Onion Rings with a Small Ice Cream Shake £5.99</p>

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LT

Kyle crew respond to urgent callout at Skye Bridge

Kyle lifeboat was called on Saturday following multiple reports of an 88m Cargo Vessel adrift in the shipping channel heading towards the Skye Bridge.

Kyle lifeboat crew were paged when the UK Coastguard declared a 'Pan Pan' situation after receiving multiple reports that the vessel had ran aground under the Skye Bridge before floating free and drifting across the shipping lane towards the bridge and nearby rocks.

Lifeboats

The Coastguard tried to contact the stricken vessel via VHF radio but received no response and due to the size of the vessel took the decision to launch both Kyle and Portree lifeboats.

Kyle lifeboat arrived on scene within two minutes of launching and found the

vessel broadside under the bridge drifting towards the rocks. The lifeboat crew tried to make contact with the crew on board the ship but could not get a response. Luckily the cargo vessel managed to restore propulsion and make its way towards the nearby pier at the Kyleakin Fish plant.

Kyle lifeboat shadowed the vessel into the pier to ensure it made it safely, and once it was alongside and secured, Portree lifeboat, which was making best speed towards the area, was stood down.

The UK Coastguard requested that Kyle lifeboat stayed on scene until local Coastguard units arrived at the location. The lifeboat stayed on scene until shortly after 6:30pm, when it was stood down.

This was the 20th callout this year for Kyle's volunteer crew.

Top designers to revamp Glencoe Folk Museum

One of the UK's leading museum design teams, responsible for high profile projects at Inverness Castle, St Albans Cathedral and Gretna Green, is now working to redevelop Glencoe Folk Museum.

Cheshire-based Mather and Co is working with Peter Drummond Architects to redevelop the museum housed in traditional thatched 18th Century cottages at Glencoe.

Founded in 1967 by Barbara Fairweather MBE, Mrs Rae Grant and friends, the museum celebrates the rich history and story of Glencoe and its people – housing a collection of over 3,000 artefacts chronicling daily life and work in the area between the 17th and 21st centuries.

These range from examples of costume and household items to a 'Coffin Boat' used to transport bodies to the local Burial Island, and even objects relating to the Jacobite rebellion and infamous Glencoe Massacre of 1692. The museum



Representatives from designers, Mather and Co, plus Peter Drummond Architects met at the museum earlier this month.

redevelopment is expected to be completed in 2023. Museum Curator Catriona Davidson explained: 'As soon as we spoke to Mather we knew they shared our vision for unlocking the museum's full potential.'

'We all love their approach of taking our unique charm and everything special about our museum and bringing it to life in new fun, accessible ways. We can't wait to see the designs.'

Mather and Co has a rounded experience of multi-site attractions development, heritage transformation projects and creative storytelling also including the R and A

World Golf Museum, The Silverstone Experience, The Olympic Museum, Coronation Street: The Tour, York Minster Revealed, Downton Abbey: The Exhibition and The Royal Mint Experience.

One of the firm's project aims at Glencoe is to provoke curiosity and to challenge visitors to expand their minds, to learn new things from the past, present, and future of Glencoe.

The redeveloped museum, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2017, will allow visitors of all ages to experience the story of Glencoe using their senses, through discovery, experimentation, hidden

reveals, exploration, and play. Malissa Geersing, Project Designer at Mather and Co, added: 'We are excited to get started on this truly inspiring project at Glencoe Folk Museum. The museum will tell the incredible stories of the Glen and its turbulent history, experiences, and daily lives of the local communities.'

'We are looking forward to bringing together the voices of the communities and history and landscape of Glencoe and the surrounding area, offering surprises, unexpected twists and turns, and inspiring moments.'

One of the aims in the development stage of the new museum is to work with local communities – this will enable visitors to explore theirs or other people's heritage in a relevant and relatable way and discover the context and the history behind their life today. Shortly after opening in 1967, Glencoe Folk Museum was an immediate success, and the collection rapidly outgrew its original premises. In 1972 it re-opened in the cottages which form the museum today, donated through the generosity of resident Hugh Grant.

School buses may be cause of primary school Covid rise

Covid is on the rise in Highland's primary schools and could be spread on the school buses, members of the council's education committee have heard, writes Fiona Scott.

Speaking last week Dr Tim Allison, director of public health and policy for NHS Highland, said areas that have not had major outbreaks in the past appear to be feeling the brunt of cases now.

'What's different now to previous waves of Covid is the preponderance among young people, particularly of primary school age,' he said.

'That's probably for two reasons: partly that young children are not vaccinated and secondly that lots of young children in the past have not been infected.'

'We have a lot of Covid within schools, particularly primary schools. What is perhaps surprising is the amount of Covid in any one class. We could get a class with a majority of children – the great majority



Dr Tim Allison.

in some cases – testing positive for Covid. That's unusual.'

Dr Allison stressed there's not one reason why Covid is on the rise in Highland primary schools but conceded that school buses could play a part.

'There may also be some differences in the way that schools work here compared with other places. An example of that could be the large number of children who travel by small school buses, and the

possibility of spread there,' he said. 'Young children on school buses may be asked to wear face masks.'

Dr Jenny Wares from Health Protection Scotland underlined the strong partnership working going on between health and education.

She clarified the process on school closures and isolation. She said that where there is one positive case, the school notifies public health and issues letters to all parents in that class.

Pupils do not need to test or self-isolate immediately, she said. This is a change from previous protocol. Instead, the advice is to be vigilant for symptoms.

If there are more positive cases in the same class, Public Health Scotland carries out a risk assessment. This aims to clarify whether the virus is spreading within the class.

If so, the entire class or even the entire school will be asked to isolate.



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Nothing like a dame!

Fort William and Ardnamurchan representative Andrew Baxter is swapping Highland Council theatrics for panto next week when he dons the dame mantle in Spotlight Theatre's production of Treasure Island.

Just five weeks after revealing he will not be standing for re-election next May, the often outspoken Independent councillor will be treading the boards at the Corran Halls in Oban as the character of Mrs Hawkins - the landlady of the local pub and mother of hero Jim. 'To be honest I'm still spinning with confusion a bit with it but rehearsals have been going really well,' said Councillor Baxter who has been rehearsing for the show since August.

'I haven't been on the stage for more than 25 years and most of my parts in the past have been quite serious so this is quite a leap into the unknown.'

'It's a renewal of an old love though and I'm enjoying every minute of it.' Councillor



Andrew Baxter as panto dame Mrs Hawkins with fellow cast members.

Photograph: Debbie Day/Spotlight Musical Theatre Group

Baxter was persuaded to audition for the panto by Spotlight Theatre Company director Stephen Day who plays Watson to his Sherlock Holmes in an exclusive production for Nevis Radio which will be aired at Christmas.

Having been a member of Inverness Operatic Society in the past, acting and singing were not a problem for Councillor Baxter, although he admits the dancing is taking a

bit more work. 'The audience can expect to be entertained with some classic dad dancing throughout the show,' added the father of two.

Treasure Island is the first Spotlight Theatre pantomime since 2017 and follows the antics of Long John Silver and his rather strange crew as well as a blossoming romance between Squire Trelawney's daughter Jennifer and Jim Hawkins.

Join them from December

2-4 at 7.30pm at the Corran Halls. There is also a matinee performance on Saturday December 4 at 2pm. Children are welcome to dress up to really get into the panto spirit.

The family-friendly production is bursting with larger-than-life characters and hi-jinks, plus lots of local faces.

Stephen Day explained: 'It's been a very different process this year with Covid-restrictions in the rehearsal room and compressed timescales, but the cast and crew have pulled together and are making the final preparations to bring the joy of live theatre back to Oban.'

Tickets are on sale now from the Corran Halls Box Office on 01631 567333. For more information visit www.spotlightmtg.co.uk/tickets

Communities warm to Loch Linnhe cable project

An upgrade to electricity supplies in the Ardnamurchan peninsula is progressing well with the installation of three new power cables under Loch Linnhe, from Bunree to Ardour, due to be completed early next year.

The project, which was years in the planning before teams arrived on site in the summer, will replace SSEN's existing infrastructure to the north of the Corran Ferry crossing and will significantly increase the resilience of the cables supplying power to the wider Ardnamurchan peninsula.

This new trio of cables are set within three ducts which are currently being laid by contractors, O'Connor Utilities (OCU) with support from Corrigan Contractors, the local subcontractor based on the adjacent Ardour Estate.

OCU site manager, Kev Cooke, a veteran of many such infrastructure projects, said: 'This has been complex and rewarding, and throughout we've been warmly welcomed by the local communities

in Ardour and Corran. By engaging with schools and community councils, our teams have kept them updated on its progress and long-term benefits.'

OCU has completed the drilling of the third cable bore, with reaming recently finished, providing added strength to the subterranean structure. Long polyethylene (PE) pipe used for the main cable duct will now be pulled through the hole and back towards the Bunree site.

The project was made possible by locating Europe's second largest Horizontal Directional Drilling rig at Bunree, just a few hundred yards from the teeming A82 trunk road.

Once the duct installation has been completed this week, O'Connor will begin the dismantling of the drill rig for removal over the next fortnight.

The project is forecast for completion early in the New Year, with some remaining reinstatement works required in the spring.

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It's last straw for Kate

News that a plastic straw ban will take effect next summer has been widely welcomed.

Kate Forbes MSP – who launched the Final Straw campaign in her Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency at the beginning of 2018 – is one of many delighted to hear that Scotland is to ban single-use plastic straws by June 1, 2022.

In an announcement last week, the Scottish Government also confirmed it wishes to implement a ban on other single-use items such as plastic cutlery, plates, beverage stirrers and balloon sticks.

Ms Forbes commented: 'A few years ago, on a cold January morning, I launched the Final Straw campaign.

'The aim was to raise awareness about single-use plastics. Over the subsequent months, a number of businesses phased out the use of plastic straws.

'I'm delighted to see the confirmation now that plastic straws will be banned. This is a victory for all who campaigned and took action.

'I have always said that we need to ensure there is provision for those who depend on straws for drinking, and I hope



Kate Forbes MSP launched the Final Straw campaign in January 2018.

the exemptions help allay fears around this point.'

It is thought that hundreds of millions of pieces of single-use plastic are wasted each year.

The Scottish Government is now encouraging businesses that will be affected by the changes to consider managing stock levels of banned items, so as to avoid waste.

The proposed legislation has a small number of targeted exemptions to ensure there are no unintentional consequences, which means those who use straws to eat or drink independently (such as for medical needs) can continue to do so.

Villagers push for safer travel tracks

Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge villagers have submitted a report to the government asking for safe active travel corridors along the trunk roads leading out of their villages.

They want a separate track away from fast and large vehicles to keep them safe, healthy and to reduce their carbon footprint.

Linda Taylor, chairwoman of Connecting Spean Roy area Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), said: 'The bureaucracy to request an active travel route was so difficult that we decided to produce our own preliminary feasibility report putting all of our ideas into one document which we have now sent to the decision makers.

'Instead of jumping into the car to go to the shop, we can walk there safely. Instead of driving into town we can cycle there and back on tracks or

quiet roads.' The group would like to see a continuation of the existing track from Roy Bridge village centre at the western end of Inverroy extended to allow a safe active travel route to Spean school.

'Active travel simply means walking or wheeling - using a wheelchair or mobility aid, cycling or scooting,' added Linda. 'It's a way of getting all of us fitter as well as cutting our carbon emissions and being sustainable.'

An active travel track from Spean Bridge village centre to Leanachan Crossroads to allow pedestrians and non-motorised traffic access to General Wades Road is also an aim of the group. They also want to see an upgrade of the path up to the Commando Memorial which is narrow where it leaves the village and the 60mph speed limit starts.

'Widening just up to the layby



Villagers are asking for a separate track away from fast and large vehicles.

would make a huge difference,' continued Linda.

The proposals have many backers.

Entrepreneur and founder of Nevis Range Ian Sykes, said: 'This is a great idea. These two villages are the nearest neighbours to Leanachan Forest and Nevis Range but they cannot be approached without a fearful bike ride along busy trunk roads. Nevis Range and Forestry and Land Scotland have been working on these

tracks for years to allow visitors and residents to enjoy. This is a great case of villagers and businesses having the same aim. I fully commend them and hope the politicians make this happen.'

'Anyone aged over 16 who empathises with our aims can join the Connecting Spean Roy Area SCIO for free,' added Linda. Visit www.activetravel-spean.wordpress.com for more information and membership forms.

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Hoolie returns with a bang

Book lovers were in their element earlier this month with the return of A Write Highland Hoolie, Mallaig's much loved book festival, writes Susan Windram.

And it really was a fabulous Hoolie.

The weekend kicked off on Friday November 12 with a free dram and an evening with Paul Murton and musicians Duncan Chisholm and Hamish Napier.

Interspersing chat about Paul's latest book, the Highland duo played tunes associated with some of the places featured.

The trio had the audience enthralled, with Duncan and Hamish's music adding an extra layer of depth and beauty to the conversation.

Over the course of the weekend audiences were treated to talks by award-winning crime writers Chris Brookmyre and E S Thomson, with her wonderful Jem Flockhart series, Lewis author Donald S Murray, food writer Ghillie Basan and nature writer, journalist and wildlife guide



Above, Hamish Napier with author Paul Murton and Duncan Chisholm; above right, Kilchrenan-based author Alan Windram with creative writing competition entrants, which he judged, at the prize giving; and inset, Taynuilt author Leonie Charlton chatted about her book, Marram.

Tom Bowser. Taynuilt author Leonie Charlton spoke beautifully about her book Marram – a very emotional journey about grief and acceptance. The talk was illustrated with some stunning photographs from her trek through the Outer Hebrides with a friend and two Highland ponies.

One of the organisers of the festival, Polly Pullar gave a very informative and amusing

talk about her book A Scurry of Squirrels, delighting the audience with anecdotes of her experience hand-rearing kits for return to the wild.

One of the highlights of the weekend was a talk by Myrtle Simpson, the 'mother of Scottish skiing' and the 10th woman to receive the Polar Medal.

At 92 this incredible woman offered her audience a glimpse



into her amazing life and adventures, one of which was being the first woman to cross Greenland's polar ice cap.

The festival also took a few of the authors into the schools for events, with authors Vivian French and Alan Windram visiting Mallaig Primary School, and Chris Brookmyre and Donald Murray spending time at the High School.

There was also a special

workshop for senior English pupils with Vivian French, Lee Randall and literary agent Jenny Brown.

Following the weekend, Polly Pullar said: 'After a depressing year off, we all felt that we came back with the kind of joie de vivre and camaraderie for which the Hoolie is recognised. This is



all down to teamwork, and to those authors and musicians who contribute every year.

'A Write Highland Hoolie is not for shrinking violets and we were so thrilled that everyone who was there added to the atmosphere and helped to make the weekend a great success.

'We were also so thrilled to have expanded more into the local schools with author visits and to have had the inauguration of a wonderful music workshop – The Hoolie School of Music Sessions – with Duncan Chisholm and Hamish Napier.

'Music is such an integral part of our book festival too. Everyone was thrilled that not only did this brilliant duo play as they chatted to broadcaster Paul Murton for our celebration opening event, but also after dinner.

'On Saturday, we were treated to the equally brilliant husband and wife team, Ingrid Henderson and Iain McFarlane.

'It really was A Write Highland Hoolie.'

An advertisement for COVID-19 testing. The background is a white tiled floor with a brown doormat that says "DO THE TEST" in black letters. The text "A wee reminder." is written in large, bold, black letters. Below it, "Let's stop the spike." is written in a smaller, bold, black font. At the bottom, the website "NHSinform.scot/testing" is listed.

A wee reminder.

Let's stop the spike.

NHSinform.scot/testing

LT

Cinema boss fumes over cancelled school bookings

Continued from page one.

and the truth is that it is incredibly damaging.'

Asked to explain the reasoning behind the cancellation decision for the bookings at the cinema in Fort William's Cameron Square, a Highland Council spokesperson told the Lochaber Times: 'Following our current educational setting position statement based on Scottish Government guidance for schools, and to mitigate further spread of Covid-19 in our schools, The Highland Council has made the difficult decision to suspend festive school trips for 2021.'

'The safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff remains a priority. The Highland Council operates a devolved school management which allows individual schools to plan their own in-school seasonal activities.'



Highland Cinema owner Angus MacDonald.

'Eden Court [theatre and cinema complex in Inverness] is working hard to provide virtual festive events that schools could consider attending.'

'We remain hopeful that by keeping festive activities school-based again this year, that we can all enjoy fun with family and friends during the holiday period.'

But Mr MacDonald said: 'I am absolutely shocked by

this decision which doesn't seem to be following Scottish Government guidelines either and not something being replicated by other councils across Scotland.'

'We will lose £10,000 in bookings as a result of this at a time when money has never been needed more.'

'And to do this now in the run up to Christmas, this year of all years, when kids are

really in need of a break and some fun more than ever is very disappointing.'

Meanwhile, Ms Forbes told the Lochaber Times: 'Last Christmas, lots of children in the Fort William area enjoyed a special end of term treat by going to the cinema to watch a film.'

'Understandably, many were keen to do the same again this year.'

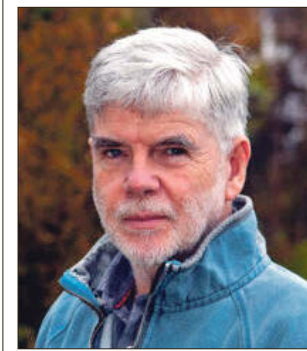
'Whilst I understand that the health and safety of pupils and staff is paramount, it would appear strange that other school trips have been continuing, but yet a visit to the cinema has been banned.'

'I have been seeking clarification about the reasons for this from Highland Council's senior officers in Inverness, who I understand are responsible for the local authority's guidance, and I am disappointed I am a week on without a response.'

Your by-election candidates

Continued from page 2.

is local housing for local people. Initiatives which should be explored include reducing the number of buy-to-let and holiday homes in the ward and giving priority to locals. We need to explore some of the ideas being put forward by Dr Foxley - restricting holiday homes in the ward is essential, but consideration has to be given to ensuring local people are given a priority as was the case in the past. I would urge you to support the Liberal Democrats who are the only party which puts local communities first.



Andy McKenna, Independent.

Our young people, traffic management, the Corran Ferry, the shortage of affordable,

green housing and sustainable tourism are all issues I will engage with if you give me your number one vote.

For the past 20 years I've been involved with community councils and parent councils, so I have a good understanding of how important community involvement is. For six years I've been working with a small committed team of local people to deliver a £3.5m marina and public slipway on Loch Linnhe at Corpach. We are so close to completing funding for this exciting community-led project and it is opening in 2022. I don't have the answers to every problem, but will do my best to support you and your community.

How about we double the charges for motorhomes and caravans on the Corran Ferry in support of sustainable tourism facilities?

Let's get some joined up thinking for Lochaber in 2022! Please use your vote on December 2 - every one matters.

HAVE YOUR SAY
email us at fort@obantimes.co.uk



TRANSMISSION

IN-PERSON PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS CANCELLED

Following the notice in last week's Oban Times advertising SSEN Transmission Planning Advice Notice (PAN) Public Consultation Events for An Suidhe, Crarae, Craig Murrail and Crossaig North Substations and the proposed Sheirdrim Windfarm project on the 30th, 1st and 2nd of December, we have made the difficult decision to cancel these events in person due to Covid-19 levels currently affecting Argyll and Bute.

We are disappointed that we have had to cancel, however, our top priority is the safety of the residents of Inveraray, Carradale and Lochgilphead and our colleagues. We hope you understand that unfortunately there is no safe way to go ahead with these events in person at this time.

If you have any queries about joining the virtual consultation, or if you would like us to send you a paper copy of the consultation booklet, please contact the Community Liaison Manager:

Caitlin Quinn
07901135758
caitlin.quinn@asse.com
1 Waterloo St, Glasgow, G2 6AY

In order to provide an opportunity for you to share your views with us, we will be continuing as planned with our virtual consultation and providing an enhanced virtual offering. Live IM chats with the project team will be held on the following dates and times:

**Wednesday 8th December 2021:
10-12 Noon**

Thursday 9th December 2021: 5-7pm

You will find further information about the virtual consultation, the project & the planning applications, access to the virtual consultation room and the feedback forms via the project webpage:

www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/argyll-and-kintyre-275kv-substations/

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Ingredients

- 500g lean beef mince (5% fat or less)
- 1 large onion & 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 large red peppers, deseeded and diced
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped
- 1 heaped tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tsp each of dried oregano, smoked paprika & ground cumin
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 400g can red kidney beans & 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- 300g dried long-grain rice
- 1 tsp ground turmeric

Method

1. Spray a large non-stick saucepan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a high heat. Add the beef and cook for 5 minutes, breaking up any lumps with a spoon, then drain off any fat.
2. Add the onion, peppers, garlic, chopped chilli, tomato purée, oregano, paprika, cumin and chilli powder to the pan, then reduce the heat to medium and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Add the beans, chopped tomatoes, stock cube and 300ml boiling water to the pan. Bring back to the boil over a high heat, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, put the rice and turmeric in a pan and cook according to the pack instructions.
5. Serve the chilli with your favourite Speed veg or salad.



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Chamber boss hails Ideas Week 'extremely positive'

This year's Lochaber Ideas Week has been hailed overall as an 'extremely positive' five days of events, coming as it did after a two-year hiatus due to the Covid pandemic.

The seventh outing of this popular fixture in the annual business and community calendar, slimmed-down and Covid-safe for 2021, brought the local business community together not only to focus on and celebrate the power of ideas, but also to inspire and inform.

In partnering with West Highland College UHI's Advancing Manufacturing Centre, Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Centre, Ben Nevis Distillery, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) West Highland and BSW Timber, Lochaber Ideas Week offered exclusive opportunities to promote business growth,

while encouraging the community back into the swing of sociable, safe, and in-person business-focussed events.

Organised by Lochaber Chamber of Commerce (LCC), Ideas Week started with an amazing turn-out from a wide variety of Highland businesses for the official opening of the new Advancing Manufacturing Centre (AMC) by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy Kate Forbes MSP.

The centre is one of 12 across Scotland which affords all businesses and emerging business ideas access to engineers, technicians and state of the art equipment.

As part of Ideas Week, the DYW team organised a trip to the new Advancing Manufacturing Centre - part of West Highland College UHI - for pupils from Mallaig High School and upper primary



Lochaber Chamber of Commerce chief executive officer Frazer Coupland, left, said it had been an extremely positive week. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

school children from Lundavra Primary.

Each cohort of students received a tour from the AMC's

staff where they viewed a 3D printer, robotic arms and other pieces of equipment in action.

This is excellent for STEM

(science, technology, engineering and maths) career promotion, and the team can't wait to get more schools through

the AMC's doors. Wednesday was all about aquaculture and the ongoing collaboration with the Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC).

There was a full house, with representation from across the sector, and the diverse industry topics covered included the use of data, recruitment, staff retention and the diversity of career opportunities available within the aquaculture industry.

Thursday saw everyone get stuck into Tourism Day, and LCC marketing manager Mark Gibbings gave a great **Continued on page 12.**

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Tourism day looks to the future

Thursday saw Tourism Day at Ben Nevis Distillery in Fort William as part of this year's Lochaber Ideas Week.

Tourism Day offered the opportunity to celebrate the resilience and inspiration of Lochaber's biggest industry.

Sustainability is the key to the future of tourism and delegates reflected on what they have learned from the challenges of the last 18 months and what future trends will shape the visitor economy of tomorrow to make sure the local tourism industry is ready for the future.

Highlights from the day included the chamber's own Mark Gibbings talking about Lochaber's position as the Outdoor Capital of the UK in relation to Covid - both now and in the future.

Online travel shopping experts Expedia looked at working with online travel agencies, travel trends and other fascinating insights.

Highland Council gave an overview of its ranger project and infrastructure, followed by specialists from VisitScotland



Mark Gibbings of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce speaks at Thursday's Tourism Day about surviving the Covid pandemic and how local tourism could build from it. Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

on making tourism and travel sustainable in the drive to net zero carbon emissions.

There was an investment update with case studies presented by well-known en-

trepreneur Angus MacDonald, alongside Nevis Range's Chris O'Brien and Alison Gainsford from Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Ruari Watt, Highland

development co-ordinator for Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland, gave an informative overview of plans for encouraging more people to get involved with biking and

Right: Colin Simpson, tourism coordinator, The Highland Council, talked about various topics including the influx of camper vans.



Right: The function suite at Ben Nevis Distillery made the perfect venue for Ideas Week Tourism Day.



to encourage visitors to use bikes as a part of their holiday, to get off the beaten track and explore the area in whatever way they like.

The day closed with a look ahead to the Cycling World Championships in 2023 and opportunities for Lochaber.



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Chamber boss hails Ideas Week 'extremely positive'

Continued from page 11.

insight into the role that the chamber takes in promoting the Outdoor Capital of the UK, with VisitScotland, Highland Council and Expedia backing up the need for collaboration and the importance of combined working.

The day was rounded off by Ruari Watt from Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland (DMBinS) and Gavin Ross from the Scottish Government's Major Events Unit covering the needs of cycle-based tourism and the likely impacts of the 2023 Cycling World Championships.

Friday included two tours of the BSW Sawmill at Corpach, with mill manager (and Lochaber Chamber Director) Olly Stephen sharing his knowledge and understanding of the processes and what the future may look like, as well as explaining the factors affecting the current markets.

These morning and afternoon tours were well attended and proved popular with interested members of the community.

In his weekly chamber briefing to members, chamber CEO

Frazer Coupland this week said it had been an extremely positive week, but admitted to being disappointed by comments from businesses in manufacturing, aquaculture, renewables and construction about the lack of engagement they are feeling from partners in education.

Mr Coupland added: "Through our DYW school coordinators and the wider DYW team we did try to engage with all of the nine secondary schools in our catchment, but only one school was able to bring pupils along to a special Ideas Week event at the Advancing Manufacturing Centre on Tuesday.

"I will this morning write to Nicky Grant, executive chief officer for education and learning at the Highland Council, to raise our businesses' concerns.

"I am sure she would agree that there needs to be a more collaborative approach from local education providers to create the kind of 'effective partnership working' that will help give our young people the opportunities they deserve after high school."



Sarah Riddle, of SAIC and Frazer Coupland, Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, introduce the aquaculture day.

Aquaculture innovations in the spotlight

Aquaculture Day, held on Wednesday November 17 at Ben Nevis Distillery, celebrated innovation in this key growth industry for Lochaber.

It was targeted towards sector professionals interested in aquaculture innovations for sustainability, training and recruiting.

The event was presented in collaboration with the Sustainable Aquaculture

Innovation Centre (SAIC). The free one-day event highlighted some of the sustainable innovations currently being developed by the sector as well as covering career prospects, recruitment challenges and opportunities.

Donald Waring, learning and development manager at MOWI, gave an informative presentation highlighting the range of career and

progression opportunities on offer locally and further afield.

Anyone with an interest in aquaculture was invited to go along, with the aim of highlighting the evolving skills required to fuel growth, as well as shining a spotlight on some of the emerging ideas and processes that could transform fish farming in the future.

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NHS Western Isles graduates Janet MacDonald, Geraldine Macrae, Christine Macleod and Meg Davies.

Island nurses graduation

Congratulations to NHS Western Isles nursing staff Janet MacDonald, Geraldine Macrae, Christine Macleod and Meg Davies, who each graduated with a Post Graduate Diploma as Advanced Nurse Practitioners from the University of Highlands and Islands on Friday November 12, writes Fiona Scott.

The newly formed Urgent Care team, previously known as the Community Unscheduled Care Nurses, delivers care as Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) with advanced skills in the assessment of patients to formulate a management

plan and prescribe. The graduates are already putting their ANP role to good use in the recent development of the Urgent Care team and are to be commended for all their hard work in achieving this award.

The Urgent Care team also provides a service both during working hours and out-of-hours, receiving referrals from both NHS24 and GPs on Lewis.

Advanced Nursing practice is essential for the development of Urgent Care in the Western Isles and the team have risen to the challenge. Congratulations to all.

National clinical director says Western Isles' Covid response has been 'absolutely inspiring'

by Fiona Scott
fscott@lochabertimes.co.uk

NHS Western Isles and the wider island communities welcomed the National Clinical Director of the Scottish Government last week who acknowledged the contributions put in during the Covid crisis and beyond.

Professor Jason Leitch spent an enjoyable and inspiring three days on Lewis, Uist and Barra hearing about the Isles' pandemic response and to acknowledge and thank staff across the services for their dedication and commitment.

During his time on Lewis, Prof Leitch met with staff in radiology, the laboratory, the emergency department, catering, domestic, laundry, Hospital at Home, clinical sup-



Professor Jason Leitch spent time with laundry staff at Western Isles Hospital on Lewis.

port nurses, infection control, dental, public health, facilities, vaccination, occupational therapy, senior management and board members.

He also visited the new care home development on Goathill Road in Stornoway and, in the evening, met some of the local agencies that had supported the vaccination pro-

gramme, including Scottish Fire and Rescue, Her Majesty's Coastguard, Street Pastors and Caberfeidh Hotel staff.

Prof Leitch said that he had heard 'inspiring stories of hard work, person-centred care and innovation'.

'It's been absolutely inspiring to spend time learning how it's been for the Covid response in

the Western Isles,' he said. 'I just want to thank everyone. The citizens who live here, the workers who work here. Thank you for everything you've done.'

NHS Western Isles chief executive, Gordon Jamieson, said: 'Staff across our health and social care services have gone above and beyond the call of duty for such a long time, to ensure the delivery of essential services.'

'Their dedication and commitment is incredible and we are proud to share and describe our services' response with the national clinical director.'

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Fort author Anne publishes first novel

by Fiona Scott
fscott@lochabertimes.co.uk

Adventure, romance, drama, betrayal, battles...

Award-winning Fort William writer Anne L MacDonell (nee Connochie) has released her first of three novels, telling the story of her ancestors during the 18th century.

Set in the rugged beauty of the Scottish Highlands, the first book in The Lochaber Glen Trilogy, Glen Rowan, has just been published, while books two and three will be released in April and October 2022 respectively.

The first book tells the story of a 13-year-old girl called Sarah, her brother Ian O'gaged 11, and their family, and how they survived very difficult times in Glen Rowan while playing heroic roles in trying to establish Bonnie Prince



Anne MacDonell

Charles as the rightful King of England and Scotland.

A multi-award winning short story writer, Anne was inspired to write The Lochaber Glen Trilogy through wondering how her own ancestors had lived and survived throughout the ages, but especially during the 18th century, a time of Bonnie Prince Charlie and

the Jacobite Rebellion. Twenty years of research is the basis of her novels.

This work gave her a great insight into the different ways people cope with life's challenges.

Anne is originally from Fort William and is the youngest daughter of the late Dr Charles Connochie, the former Lochaber GP and Superintendent of the Belford Hospital and recipient of the Freedom of the Burgh of Fort William (Connochie Road in Upper Achintore is named in his honour). Anne's mother Frances MacDonell was originally of Spean Bridge where her parents, one a MacDonell of Glengarry and the other a MacDonell of Keppoch, owned the Spean Bridge Hotel.

The youngest of five children, Anne grew up in the family home at Glentower

which was built as the Lower Observatory for the Met Office, taking daily weather readings from Ben Nevis and measuring any earthquake tremors along the Great Glen fault line, with adjoining doctor's surgery on Achintore Road, Fort William.

Anne now lives in the North West of Ireland. Secretarial training led to her joining a company on the Slough Trading Estate, where she became a director and company secretary. In her spare time she graduated in the social sciences and had a career for many years as a probation officer in Greater London.

The property is now an award-winning guest house on the A82 entrance to Fort William.

Glen Rowan is available to buy in The Highland Bookshop and the West Highland Museum.



Captain Kenny Morrison with some of his CalMac crewmates.

End of an era for captain Kenny

One of CalMac's longest serving ferry captain's has come ashore after 27 years of service, writes Fiona Scott.

Captain Kenny Morrison has been a regular on the Sound of Harris for 25 years, navigating the route from Berneray and Leverburgh on a daily basis.

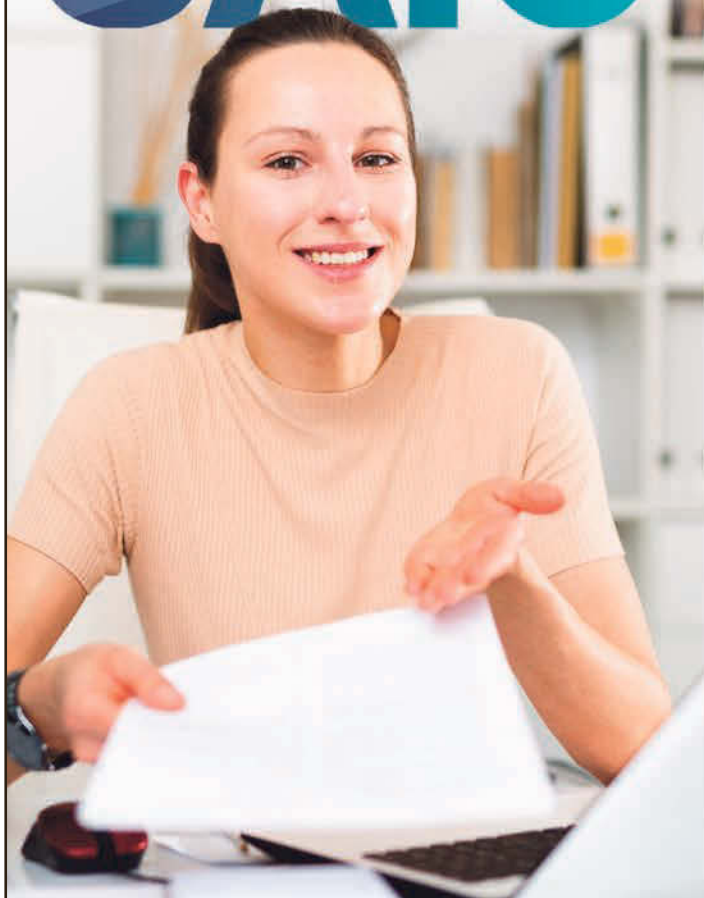
His retirement on Tuesday November 9 marked the end of an era and friends and colleagues turned out to give him a worthy send off.

Originally from Berneray, Kenny crossed the Sound many a time as a youngster to attend secondary school

and then as a fisherman for 16 years before he joined CalMac as a deckhand in 1994.

He started on the Sound of Harris route when it was inaugurated in 1996 and became seaman-purser on the Loch Bhrosda. He became skipper of the same vessel in 1999, going back to college to get his master's ticket ahead of the arrival of the Loch Portain.

Kenny and his wife Tricia have lived in Inverness since 2004 but plan to spend their retirement between Berneray and Glasgow, where they have family.



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The Women Returners Programme is funded by the Scottish Government and administered by Skills Development Scotland.



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LETTERS

It is exactly five years since metals giant GFG Alliance bought the Lochaber smelter, two nearby hydro plants and 166,000 acres of accompanying estate lands.

But instead of birthday celebrations, the last few days have witnessed howls of protest from opposition politicians at Holyrood after the Scottish Government was forced to disclose the total value of a guarantee covering power supply payments as being a staggering £586M.

But what is more concerning is the fact that part of the bargain struck between GFG and the Scottish Government in return for this guarantee was a transfer to the community of what has been described as a 'significant' portion of that 166,000 acres.

This week the Lochaber Times pressed GFG Alliance to say what its intentions are as far as community land transfer is concerned to be told GFG would just stick with an overall statement it gave us detailing its commitment to invest in the smelter site.

We are certain the Scottish Government will still expect to see a community land transaction take place: that is why it was included in the guarantee. The fact that the Scottish Government has a security over the land is pertinent too.

More importantly the community expects it also and it is the right and proper way forward.

The editor welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.

However we reserve the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime phone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Please email: editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

The views expressed on our letters page are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of The Oban Times.

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Thank you

A big thank you to Argyll Community Housing Association and all the staff at Dunmar Court, Oban, for the kindness and hospitality they showed me last Wednesday, which I will not forget.

I was one of the residents evacuated from the houses near Millpark because of the fire incident at the council yard.

Stephen Jones, Oban.

Argyll earthquake

I write about the Achnamara earth tremor of November 16.

The British Geological Survey maintain a series of earthquake monitoring stations around Britain, the only one in Argyll being in Lochavich. Seismograph readings are transmitted by satellite to Edinburgh for analysis and real time seismograms can be viewed at www.earthquakes.bgs.ac.uk/helicorder/heli.html

The seismogram for the Achnamara tremor on Tuesday November 16 can be viewed by following the link, selecting LAWE under station, then 'short period' and the date. It occurred at a depth of 12 kilometres and was of 3.3 magnitude on the Richter scale.

For comparison, the 7.9 Richter earthquake in Haiti on August 14 this year can be found under LAWE, 'very long period' and the date.

Tony Dalton, Lochavich, By Tainuilit.

False premise

I see that the second homes controversy is raising its head yet again, but those who advocate restrictions on selling to people for second homes are basing their argument on the false premise that we should be encouraging young people to stay in the area. We should not.

Instead we should be encouraging them to take full advantage of a Scottish education, once the best in the world but now sadly declining under SNP 'management', to get universally recognised qualifications and take that expertise out into the wide world and use it for the benefit of everyone.

When they have made their mark, or their fortunes, or both, then is the time to return to their birthplace and apply their new found wealth for the benefit of those less fortunate. And one of the best ways to do this is by building houses and second homes. Remember a second home is only a camper van without wheels but it does contribute much larger

sums in terms of taxation and needs constant attention by way of upkeep, repair and garden maintenance, all of which provide good local employment. No home is affordable without a job and rather than vilify second home owners we should be thankful they chose Scotland rather than somewhere else in the world.

Andrew Green, Ardtoe.

Achnacloich Bridge

Following Mr Ross's statement and Mr Wheeler's letter to The Oban Times regarding the road markings at Achnacloich Bridge, I too have looked up the relevant section of the Traffic Signs Manual and it is clear to me these new road markings do not comply.

I attach the relevant drawing from the manual together with a rather revealing photograph of the road markings from BEAR's website. The difference is obvious.

Ironically, the position of the car in BEAR's own photograph shows perfectly why these road markings can be so dangerous.

Only last Saturday, I needed to make an emergency stop at the bridge because a car heading towards me suddenly put on its indicator and swerved into the marked centre lane.

Although the incredible number of signs, flashing lights and road markings at the bridge is already distracting, perhaps there should also be further signs advising non-HGVs to keep left. Or better still, revert to the pre-stupidity markings and signs which worked pretty well for 140 years.

G G MacDonald, by Dalmally.

Argyll earthquake

The spin doctors say that a new global deal has been achieved at COP26 in Glasgow.

The truth is different. Coal will only be 'phased down' not 'phased out'.

However Nicola Sturgeon managed to grab the headlines and squander another £12 million of taxpayers' money on top of the £24 million already squandered on developing nations.

The UK's share of the \$100 billion a year promised to developing nations includes Scotland, but Ms Sturgeon has to grandstand and add £36 million. Meanwhile in Scotland deprived areas, the NHS, local authorities and those in fuel poverty suffer.

Clark Cross, Linlithgow.

Freezing trains

Here we go again with a winter of freezing trains on the West Highland line.

YOUR PICTURE



Oban reader Linda Thomson sent us this stunning photo to share with our readers, please send it as a jpeg by email to editor@obantimes.co.uk

Is it so difficult to have these trains heated? What's the problem?

If the heaters are knackered, fix them. Fare paying passengers, old and very young, have had to put up with this problem every winter for years and it is not on.

The onboard staff must be sick of telling passengers to go into the next coach as its a bit warmer.

I would like to see a senior member of ScotRail speak to the Lochaber Times/The Oban Times and tell suffering passengers why their trains are like ice boxes.

Or is the day coming when boarding passengers will be issued with hot water bottles to keep them warm?

Joe Wilson, Spean Bridge.



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RES



Photograph of Connel Bridge taken from Bonawe Road. If you have a photograph that you would like to share, please email - no more than 2MB - to editor@obantimes.co.uk

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



'S gann a chreideas mi cho luath 's a tha mi a' faireachadh an ùine a' dol seachad, agus mun àm a bhios an colbh seo ga fhoillseachadh cha bhi ach ceithir seachdainean gu latha na Nollaige agus othail thiodhlacan is ròicean bidh!

Nach bu mhath gur ann mar sin a bhiodh cùisean dha na h-uile, ach chan ann, agus tha e brònach smaoinichadh air na bheil troimhe chèile feadh an t-saoghail nuair a tha sinn a' teannadh air ràith subhachais! Air crìochan na Pòlainn tha mìltean air an glacadh eadar 'clach' chruaidh Bhearus fo smachd an-ìochdmhor Alexander Grigoryevich Lukashenko, agus 'sgrath' arm na Pòlainn is saighdearan a' dìon crìochan na dùthcha. Tha bliadhnaichean bho thòisich na mìltean de dh'fhògarraich a' dèanamh slighe fhada chun nartach bho chaochladh dhùthchannan an ear, is iad a' sireadh sìth, cosnadh, agus beatha ùr air an taobh an iar. Gun teagamh tha cuid a' teicheadh bho gheur-leanmhainn agus ana-ceartas, tha feadhainn eile dìreach a' lorg barrachd saidhbheireis eaconamach, agus 's neònach mur eil cuid a dh'eucorach nam measg cuideachd. Ach 's coma dè thug an taobh seo iad tha e doirbh dha neach ceart sam bith gun cho-fhaireachadh a bhith aige nuair a chì e na truaghain sin is iad fliuch, fuar, agus acrach, agus tric ann an cunnart am beatha a' feuchainn tarsainn a' Chaolais Shasannaich ann an sgollag de bhàta rubair neo plastaig. Aig an aon àm tha e doirbh cuideachd gun suim a ghabhail ann am misneachd agus dìongmhaltas nan daoine sin, cuid aca a' siubhal le clann òga, is

iad a' lorg 'Tir a' Gheallaidh' aca!

Ach chan e sin a tha ron a' mhòr-chuid aca san Roinn Eòrpa idir, agus fiù 's dhan fheadhainn a gheibh tèarmann ann an dùthaich air choreigin tha dùbhlain cosnadh, teachd-an-tir, agus dachaigh a' feitheamh, gun iomradh air cunnart a' bhiorais Covid 19 a tha a-rithist a' sgapadh mar fhalaig feadh chuid de dhùthchannan na h-Eòrpa. An dèidh na tha a' mhòr-ghalair seo air a dhèanamh de sgrìos feadh an t-saoghail mar-thà tha e da-rìribh doirbh a thuigsinn carson a tha mìltean de shluagh a' togail fianais agus ri eucoir an aghaidh bhanachdachaichean a tha a-nise dearbhte mar bhacadh is tilleadh air a' bhioras. Saoilidh mi gum bi mòran a' faireachadh mì-chofhurtail mu riaghailtean a tha a' sparradh banachdach, ach 's e firinn na cùise gum bheil mòran de shluagh an t-saoghail mar-thà air a dhion le banachdachaichean ghalaran mharbhtach eile a tha ga chur orra gun fhaighneachd. Theagamh gur e dìreach leisgeul a th' ann dha cuid ùpraid agus cron a dhèanamh, agus abair eadar-dhealachadh bhon fheadhainn a thug na milleanan not seachad air an t-seachdain seo chaidh a-rithist airson a' charthannais Clann ann an Èis aig a' BhBC. Chan eil teagamh nach e deagh theisteanas a tha seo air fialaidheachd sluagh Bhreatann, fiù 's is cuid de na saighdearan againn a' cuideachadh le togail challaidean air crìochan na Pòlainn gus clann agus eile a chumail a-mach às an Roinn-Eòrpa!

Allan Campbell, ailean@obantimes.co.uk

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

The climate conference in Glasgow was billed as the biggest, but quickly lost media headlines. It was trumpeted as the most inclusive – but non-governmental organisations, activists, indigenous groups lacked access to power. It was presented as our last chance – but its agreements are tame and any nation can ignore them.

Before, many young people were in despair, facing a life of pandemics, extreme weather, shortages, vast movements of people. It's not only us – wild animals, insects, trees and plants all suffer.

How do we break patterns of consumerism, of taking more than the Earth can sustain?

How can we be our brother's keeper when we close the gates of Europe against the desperate, persecuted, hopeless, as climate change causes war, drought, famine?

At the end of the final book of the Bible we hear of the 'new Jerusalem', where beside a clear river grows the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Peace can come and the earth can heal us. God's plan is for the good of all.

The Book of Revelation is anything but peaceful, full of storminess, destruction and suffering. Nor is the gift of healing the nations cheap, though it is free. The scriptures call us to

be co-workers in the healing, aware of the needs and rights of our fellow human beings.

Many of us make small sacrifices and cut back on what we own, eat, wear, waste, loving our neighbour by practical action, and I believe prayer magnifies the effect. By setting ourselves aside, we become fully ourselves in permitting God to take us out of egocentricity to become more fully ourselves, letting our true inner core to shine through.

Christians are called to action too, hence so many were present, singing, protesting, debating, urging at COP26. One practical act is not to buy more than we need; nor from companies,

especially the ones with international power, unless we are satisfied they respect the planet in production, transport and recycling and in their morals over staff treatment, from producing raw materials to doorstep deliveries.

Commitment to prayer, to protest wrongdoing, to practical service, to healing are present at the heart of Christian faith.

Whenever we give the natural world a chance to recoup, to regenerate, it is astonishing how fast it does so. It is as if nature is on our side, hoping to heal us and our nations.

Rosemary Power is a writer and a retired church professional.

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LT

DISTRICT NEWS



The litter-picking St Bride's team.

ONICH

Little ones pick their moment

Children from St Bride's Nursery in Onich have been learning how to keep their environment clean whilst raising money for Children in Need. The youngsters thank the community of North Ballachulish and Onich for supporting them in their litter-picking fundraiser.

ARDGOUR

Good progress on ELC projects

The Highland Council says it is continuing to make good progress on the remaining 19 early learning and childcare (ELC) capital works projects.

Seven of these projects are due to be completed in the next two months, including Ardgour Primary School.

There remains some contingency or interim arrangements in place for some settings awaiting completion of capital works. However, all children/parents/carers can access 1,140 hours of ELC should they wish to.

Highland is now delivering 1,140 hours in 225 settings. This is represented by 147 local authority settings, 23 private providers, 28 voluntary sector partners and through 27 commissioned childminders.

There are also 16 settings currently inactive, where there is not at present sufficient demand within the community.

A total of 16 ELC settings in Highland are offering Gaelic Medium provision to 295 children.

CAOL AND MALLAIG

No by-election ruling

Following the resignation of former councillor Ben Thompson, ward 11, Caol and Mallaig, earlier this month, The Highland Council has confirmed no by-election to fill the vacancy will take place.

As the vacancy for this ward has occurred within six months of the local government election on May 5 next year, an election shall not be held, in line with the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The process to elect a councillor for Ward 21, Fort William and Ardnamurchan, is currently under way as this vacancy falls outwith the six-month legislative time.

Polling for that by-election will take place on Thursday December 2 with the votes to be counted within the ward on Friday December 3.

LOCHABER

Girls invest in competition

Girls from Lochaber High in Fort William are to battle it out with rivals from across Scotland in a contest to prove they can be the next stars of the investment industry.

Students from Lochaber High School, Fortrose Academy, Millburn Academy in Inverness and Tain Royal Academy are among more than 70 teams from 48 schools taking part in the Growing Future Assets Competition, designed to nurture a future generation of female investment experts.

The contest, which aims to introduce senior girls to the world of investment and its range of careers, sees the teenagers vying to spot the next big investment opportunity. And it has ignited fierce competition this year with entries up by 300 per cent. Financial educators Future Asset are challenging 320 girls, divided into teams of 13-18-year-olds to research, analyse and pitch a company they think will be a great long-term investment. The youngsters are paired with a mentor from an investment company to provide advice, inspiration and career insights and have the chance to attend online masterclasses as they develop an understanding that good investing focuses on a company's long-term prospects, profits and sustainability. Experts from journalism and business are also advising the teenagers. Now in its third year, the competition features a senior contest for years S5 and S6 and a junior



Inverlochry Primary School pupils enjoyed planting trees at Lochaber Rural Education Trust's An Clachan base at Torlundy. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

A lesson in growth for Inverlochry pupils

Inverlochry Primary School pupils did their bit for the environment by planting trees around Lochaber Rural Education Trust's An Clachan base at Torlundy.

A total of 49 seedling trees, including beech, oak and birch, were provided by the trust.

The primary six pupils carefully planted the seedlings and hope to visit them as they grow

over the years.

All the youngsters enjoyed planting the trees and revisiting the trust.

When they were in primary three they had taken part in the 'Seed to Supper' project, growing and tending their own vegetables, which they then cooked and served up to friends and family.

challenge for S3 and S4. The teams of three to six girls will present their case in a research report and three-minute pitch by Tuesday November 30. The top teams will then deliver an extended pitch to judges at the final in March next year.

At stake is £1,000 for the winning senior school and £200 worth of vouchers of the students' choice for each team member and £800 for the best junior school and £150 worth of vouchers each. Senior and junior runners-up receive £500 and £100 of vouchers, and £400 and £75 of vouchers, respectively.

'Air-raising' effort from community funding group

Lochaber Community Fundraising has raised more than £7,000 for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance.

The non-profit-making organisation sold a phenomenal 1,427 tickets for a raffle with around 30 prizes donated by businesses and individuals around the area. The draw was made on Sunday November 14 and raised £7,135,

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Cancer charity benefits from seal trip tips



From left: Shirlie Geddes, Ian Hay, Chris MacKinnon, Jane Mackenzie, Calum Mackenzie, Marie Finlayson and Sheila Harvey.

with an additional £200 raised by auctioning off tickets to see Genesis. Prizes in the raffle included a seven-night, all-inclusive stay for two in the Canary Islands, short breaks in various Highland locations, an inflatable hot tub, outdoor pizza oven, snowsports season pass and a £100 Eden Court voucher.

Founding member of Lochaber Community Fundraising Lindsay MacDonald said: 'Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to everyone who supported this. We could not have achieved this wonderful total without the amazing prizes that had been kindly donated and without all of our fantastic supporters who helped us sell a phenomenal 1,427 tickets.'

Lindsay's husband Angus of A A MacDonald Joinery in Spean Bridge was one of many who donated raffle prizes. Angus's nephew Callum MacDonald was rescued after going over a steep embankment in a loadall. 'Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance provides a vital service for the Highlands, Islands and beyond,' added Lindsay. 'We are delighted the Lochaber community pulled together for this very worthy lifeline

charity. Great things can happen when we work together.'

Nick Harvey, director of fundraising and communications at SCAA, said the support of the community was key to sustaining the charity's life-saving service and he thanked everyone involved in the Lochaber Community Raffle for their 'tremendous achievement'.

'This innovative, energised and enthusiastic type of fundraising support is what helps to keep us flying,' he added. 'SCAA relies 100 per cent on public donations and communities the length and breadth of Scotland play their part in ensuring we are there for those most in need. Our sincere thanks go to all the individuals and businesses who donated prizes and the members of the public who bought raffle tickets in support of SCAA. Their support will undoubtedly help save lives.'

Anyone wishing to donate to Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance can do so through its Just Giving page. To find out more about Lochaber Community Fundraising visit the Facebook page.

PLOCKTON

More than £2,500 has been donated to a cancer charity by crew members of a boat which runs trips out of Plockton.

At a ceremony on board Calum's Seal Trip's boat Sula Bheag on Monday November 15, £2,589.20 was presented to Macmillan Cancer Lochalsh, Glenelg and Skye branch.

The money was raised from tips collected during this year's outings.

Calum said it was not as much as previous years as people don't carry money so much now and they pay online for the trips.

His most famous passenger this year was tennis star Maria Sharapova.

Accepting the cheque was Marie Finlayson, branch treasurer for more than 30 years. Also present was Shirlie Geddes, senior fundraising manager for the north and east of Scotland.

Missing from the photograph are Joy Mackenna, Douglas Hamilton and Malcolm Mackenzie who also crewed for Calum.

species for conservation as identified in the new Highland Biodiversity Action Plan. Nature is under pressure as never before but there are things we can do, and our first step is to educate our young learners about what mammals we have.'

Pupils will be given the chance to showcase their skills by creating a model, producing art or taking photographs in a Highland mammal competition to be judged by a yet to be disclosed, but well-known, wildlife personality.

For schools to get involved, contact your local ranger at www.highlifehighland.com/rangers/



Pupils are being given the chance to take part in mammal conservation work.

Pupils get chance to aid mammal conservation

Every school across Lochaber and the wider Highland region is to be offered the chance to take part in mammal conservation work by High Life Highland Countryside Rangers.

Highland mammals, past and present, is the theme for the ranger service next year, aiming to highlight to the younger generation the different species around them and what they can do to conserve them.

Countryside Ranger for North West Sutherland Donald Mitchell explained: 'The pupils will go out with their local Ranger and look for tracks and signs and collect evidence of mammals within their own areas or school grounds.'

'We aim to make pupils more aware of the large range of mammal species that occur within the Highlands, from water voles to Scottish wildcats, and from otters to pipistrelle bats. We will be looking particularly at those priority

ACHARACLE

Community council falls into abeyance after resignation

Acharacle Community Council (ACC) has fallen below the required number of councillors and as a result goes into abeyance following last week's decision by community councillor Joanne Matheson to stand down.

She gave as her reason an alleged lack of attendance since August at community council meetings by one particular councillor, which Mrs Matheson said she found 'unacceptable'.

Mrs Matheson posted on the community council's Facebook page: 'Since we only have the minimum number of councillors required, my resignation has put ACC into abeyance.'

'Highland Council has been notified and we will be able to hold an election early next year. Please give consideration to whether you would be willing to stand.'

'We should try to avoid having the minimum number of councillors again, if possible.'



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Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



After missing last year, there will be a welcome return to the annual Park Bar quiz on Tuesday December 7 - or 'Quiz in the Park' as it is called this year.

I imagine the scores will be considerably higher than previously because everybody is very well practised at quizzes these days after all the lockdown hours spent on Zoom quizzes.

There must barely be a quiz question that hasn't been asked over the last year and a half.

If there's one man to find fresh questions, though, it is Donnie 'Maroot' Macleod and it is he who will be doing just that. He is well versed in hosting quizzes having recently hosted his own works quiz over on the Isle of Man.

I am told one of the rounds in that quiz was 'Lockdown' where all the answers included either 'lock' or 'down'.

It was bad enough that his first question apparently was: 'Which body of water in Scotland is said to have a monster?', knowing that all his local colleagues pronounce Loch Ness as 'Lock' Ness.

But his second question was even worse: 'What is the Scottish Gaelic word for brown?' Gaelic speakers will have a laugh at that joke, the word in question being 'donn', but whether Donnie's colleagues enjoyed it quite as much is a matter for only Donnie to know.

The Park Bar quiz will boast teams from territorial associations, Gaelic choirs, bands,



Kathryn Callander, John Joe MacNeil, John Campbell, Ian Lamont, Kaitlin Ross, Jamie MacDonald, and Mary Ann Kennedy.

and random groups of friends - all competing for the coveted prize.

Will Ardnamurchan reclaim their title from current champions, Cumbernauld Gaelic Choir? Will Skerryvore be the highest placed band again?

There is only one way to find out. There will be a raffle with all proceeds going to the lifeboats and the evening begins at half seven for eight o'clock.

Tiree Association

The Tiree Association annual gathering concert went ahead last Thursday evening and was streamed live on Facebook.

I am on tour down in England at the moment so I haven't managed to watch the concert back, however, I hear it was a fantastic success.

The association expressed its thanks on Facebook to everyone who helped to make the concert a big success.

It wrote that it was thorough-

ly entertained by a host of very talented musicians: Mary Ann Kennedy, Jamie MacDonald, Kaitlin Ross, John Joe MacNeil, Kathryn Callander, and association piper John Campbell.

The chairperson, Ian Lamont, kept the evening going with lots of tales and laughs.

Gratitude was also expressed to Nick Turner for all his technical and sound assistance and to the dedicated bakers who provided the refreshments.

There was a huge response to the raffle so the association's final thanks was, therefore, to all who donated prizes and to everyone who bought tickets.

I am sorry to have missed the concert but delighted that it went ahead.

I would echo the association's hope, expressed in the same Facebook post, that this is the return of live events and that we will see many more similar functions very soon.

Levelling up for Gaelic media

Levelling up in both statute and finance and planning for a positive digital future for Gaelic, these are the key messages in MG ALBA's ambitious vision for the future of Gaelic media.

Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media outlines a future where Gaelic media is at the heart of Gaelic communities; generating growth in language capability; a key economic driver; and ensuring that young people have a digital domain which will be crucial to ensure the future of the language.

At the core of this vision is a statement of intent that prioritises Gaelic media audiences. Containing wide-ranging targets which have young people as a focus, it is evident that Gaelic media in the digital world is an essential element in addressing the positioning of Gaelic in modern society.

Beyond the audience benefits, it is a bold vision for Gaelic media which demonstrates the significant opportunities which could be realised for communities, language, and economy.

Leading this vision, MG ALBA celebrates the community, partnerships and industry delivery which are fundamental to Gaelic media but highlights the important areas which are preventing Gaelic media from delivering on what its potential promises.

MG ALBA Chair Allan MacDonald said: 'Our new Lèirsinn is a wake-up call for all our stakeholders and partners to come together and provide the basis for the Gaelic public service media of the future.'

'This vision outlines an opportunity that cannot be allowed to pass for our culture and our economy. There is a

real risk that failing to establish Gaelic media in the digital world will have repercussions for our language and our communities.'

MG ALBA Chief Executive Donald Campbell said: 'Ofcom has been warning broadcasters that they need to speed up their transformation for the digital age. Among other things, Gaelic media urgently need to address the needs of younger audiences with news and media content that is simply not possible within current resources.'

'This Lèirsinn is a Route Map for doing just that. It is an investment proposition that sets out how Gaelic media can connect with all audience segments and be a catalyst for growth in language, in our communities and our economies. It demonstrates what Gaelic media could deliver if it is given the right tools.'

HIGHLAND CINEMA

FRI 26TH NOV - THUR 2ND DEC



FRIDAY 26TH NOVEMBER
No Time To Die (12a) 10:45am.
 Encanto (PG) 11am, 1:45pm + 4:30pm. **Mothering Sunday (15)** 2:15pm.
 Ghostbusters: Afterlife (12a) 4:45pm + 7:15pm. **Spencer (12)** 7:45pm.

SATURDAY 27TH NOVEMBER
The Boss Baby 2: Family Business (PG) 10:45am.
 Encanto (PG) 11:15am, 2pm + 4:30pm. **Ghostbusters: Afterlife (12a)**
 1:30pm + 4:45pm. **No Time To Die (12a)** 7pm. **Spencer (12)** 7:45pm.

SUNDAY 28TH NOVEMBER
The Boss Baby 2: Family Business (PG) 10:45am. **Encanto (PG)** 11:15am,
 1:30pm + 5:20pm. **Anything Goes - The Musical (U)** 2pm.
Ghostbusters: Afterlife (12a) 4:15pm + 7:15pm. **Spencer (12)** 7:50pm.

MONDAY 29TH NOVEMBER
Spencer (12) *Bairs At The Box Office 10:45am.*
Highlands From The Air (U) 11:45am. **No Time To Die (12a)** 1pm.
Encanto (PG) 1:30pm + 4:30pm. **Ghostbusters: Afterlife (12a)**
 4:15pm + 7pm. **Never Gonna Snow Again (15)** 7:15pm.

TUESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER
Encanto (PG) 1:45pm + 4:45pm. **Ghostbusters: Afterlife (12a)**
 2pm + 7:30pm. **Spencer (15)** 4:30pm. **Dune (12a)** 7:15pm.

WEDNESDAY 1ST DECEMBER
No Time To Die (12a) 10:30am. **Mothering Sunday (15)** 10:45am.
Ghostbusters: Afterlife (12a) 1:15am + 4:45pm.
Encanto (PG) 2pm + 4:15pm. **Spencer (12)** 7:45pm.

THURSDAY 2ND DECEMBER
Encanto (PG) 10:30am, 1:30pm + 4:15pm. **No Time To Die (12a)** 10:45am.
Mothering Sunday (15) 2:15pm. **Ghostbusters: Afterlife (12a)**
 4:45pm + 7:15pm. **Spencer (15)** 7:45pm.



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QUALITY CARE SINCE 1923



The Banavie Primary School team which finished first.

Banavie pupils run off with championship

Banavie Primary School stole the show at this year's Lochaber Primaries Cross Country Running Championships.

They claimed the Samuel and Partner's overall shield with first, second and fourth place finishes in boys' and girls' events.

The two bronze medals were taken by Caol Primary School to give them second place in the team event ahead of Spean Bridge Primary.

Fastest time of the day was posted by Aaron Tresidder from Banavie Primary School. Primary six pupil Aaron recorded the second fastest time on the championship course at Leanachan Forest, Torlundy, beaten only by Sorley Swabey's time from 2018.

In second place was Freddie Smith, also from Banavie, with Angus Riddle from Caol Primary School taking the final place on the boys' podium.

First in the girls' standings and the fourth fastest overall was Lily Cant, Banavie Primary School, who beat the previous course record by 27 seconds.

Lily is in P5 so it will be fascinating to see just how far she'll be able to push the record over the next two years if she keeps training as hard.

Katie Pescod, Banavie, was second in another impressive time with third spot taken by Isla Ross, Caol.

Thanks go to all the participants, parents and staff who



The talented runners from Caol Primary School team which finished second.



Spean Bridge Primary School were third.

went along to support the event and to help on the day and Lochaber Active Schools team which organised this year's event.

Results: Boys: 1 Aaron Tresidder, Banavie Primary School, 09:52; 2, Freddie Smith, Banavie; 10:09; 3 Angus Riddle, Caol Primary School, 10:16; 4 Daniel Fronczek, Banavie, 10:55; 5 Allan Curtis, Kilchoan Primary School,

11:11; 6 Finn Watt, Spean Bridge Primary School, 11:29.

Girls: 1 Lily Cant, Banavie, 10:44; 2, Katie Pescod, Banavie, 11:18; 3 Isla Ross, Caol, 12:19; 4 Millie Alderson, Banavie, 13:20; 5 Sylvie Fisher, Ardgrey Primary School, 13:32; 6 Freya Camesky (BSGLA) 13:39.

Overall schools: 1 Banavie; 2 Caol; 3 Spean Bridge; 4= Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar and Ardour Primary School.

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SHINTY ROUND-UP

Camanachd Association AGM

The annual general meeting of the Camanachd Association will take place via Microsoft Teams on Friday November 26 at 7.30pm.

Finance director Daniel Palombo will tell the meeting that the Camanachd Association's 2020 annual accounts report a turnover of £352,819, a decrease of £261,749 from 2019. However the association reported an operating surplus after tax of £16,440, down from £26,910 in 2019. The association's reserves increased to £172,852 as at December 31 2020.

There was a drop in the number of adult female and youth registered players which can be put down to the reduced number of fixtures because of Covid restrictions. The completed fixtures record was similarly affected. New Camanachd Association president Steven MacKenzie will use his first annual report to thank everyone involved in the effort to ensure a return to shinty in the face of a global pandemic.

There will also be thanks to all host clubs and Argyll and Bute Council for stepping up to the mark when it was decided to relocate the 2021 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup final to Mossfield, Oban.

Chief executive officer Derek Keir will speak of the unprecedented challenges in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic which have had a significant impact on the Camanachd Association.

It is recommended that individual membership fees for adult, student and youth members, and the fee for club and affiliate members remain unchanged. It is also proposed that competition fees remain unchanged whilst insurance levels return to 2020 rates.

They were discounted last season, with the option of a new enhanced personal accident cover rate for adults and youths.

Ross Brown recently stepped down from the role of Camanachd Association director whilst Lyndsay Bradley, a primary school cluster head teacher in Ayrshire, stands for re-election. A UKCC Level 1 shinty coach, Lyndsay Bradley was involved in developing shinty at all

levels at Ardnamurchan and is passionate about continuing the growth in the sport. She has also coached the South Under 14 girls for the past few years and coached the Scotland Under 18s Ladies team for the two previous seasons. The Camanachd Association is a not-for-profit member-led organisation led by a board elected at the annual general meeting by member clubs and associations.

The 2021 Camanachd Association board comprised of: Steven MacKenzie, president; Burton Morrison, competitions; Lyndsay Bradley, officials; Kirsty Deans, volunteering, safeguarding and UK Anti-Doping; Willie MacDonald, Youth Player Pathway; John Finlayson, communications and facilities - Highland; Roddy McCuish, communications and facilities - West and Central; Daniel Palombo, finance; Ross Brown, coaching and development - equality and inclusion; John MacKenzie, chieftain, and Richard Gall, vice chieftain.

This year's AGM will be followed by a short session to discuss the 2022 shinty season, the new Camanachd Association Strategy and how everyone can work together to ensure shinty continues to progress.

Newtonmore begins manager search

Newtonmore has started looking for a new first team manager following Orsten Gardner's decision to stand down. Orsten took over from PJ MacKintosh at the end of the 2019 season. The club hopes to appoint a successor at next month's annual general meeting.

Ballachulish raise charity funds

Ballachulish Shinty Club members are taking part in 'Movember' to raise money for Prostate Cancer Research.

One in eight males in the UK will be diagnosed with prostate cancer but early detection means a 98 per cent chance of survival beyond five years. Late detection offers only a 26 per cent chance of survival over the same timeframe. Details of how to donate can be found on the Ballachulish club's Facebook page.

Jags show strength in depth in lively league encounter

Eastwood Parkmount SLT	2
Greater Glasgow Premier Amateur Football League	2

This lively league encounter lived up to the old cliché of 'a game of two halves'.

South Lochaber Thistle were two nil up at half time with Eastwood Parkmount 'A' winning the second half by the same scoreline.

Forced into nine changes from last week's already reshuffled team, the Jags gave a starting debut to Graham Laidlaw and a first start to Archie Bowman in the full back areas as SLT went for a back five - starting the game with nine recognised defenders in the squad.

Unfortunately for the Kinlochleven outfit, the returning Bradley Flannigan, one of those defenders, caught his studs in the turf not two minutes into the game whilst challenging the Eastwood striker, resulting in an early debut for Connor Kellett who slotted in with Andrew Moore and Stevie Neil at the heart of the defence.

The heavy grass park made it tough going for both sides and David Wilson was called upon to keep the Jags in the game on more than one occasion with the woodwork helping him out



Alan Gray.

to keep the home side at bay. Midway through the first half veteran, loyal SLT man, home owner and - for a short time - referee Dave Forbes found Lewis Murphy with a well-taken header. Murphy flicked the ball over the on-rushing defender before scampering around the forlorn Eastwood man before finishing into the bottom corner.

Things went from good to better when renowned caman swinger and hard tackler Michael Rodger lined up a free kick five yards in from the touchline on the Eastwood left 25 yards out. His cross/shot deceived the goalkeeper and nestled in the back of the net, much to the management's delight.

Unfortunately, the second

half didn't start as the Jags would have hoped with Eastwood scoring within 30 seconds of the re-start.

The Parkmount side were in the ascendancy and piling the pressure onto the Jags' backline.

Man mountain Stevie Neil was winning every header and challenge with a 'Braveheartesque' performance. The Oban man's ability to lead the backline and put his body on the line for his team was integral to keeping the Eastwood forwards at bay.

'It is especially good to see the younger lads coming in and showing up well.'

With the game turning in favour of Eastwood, Kian Cameron was brought on for Bowman with the Jags changing shape to combat the dominant Eastwood.

This seemed to do the trick, but with 15 minutes left to go, the Eastwood winger got free down the right and cut the ball back to the striker. His shot was magnificently saved by the inspired Wilson, only for the keeper to see the other forward nip in and finish on the rebound.

But the Jags held out to the final whistle to come away with a hard-earned and deserved point.

Speaking about the performance, manager Alan Gray said: 'If we'd been offered a draw before kick-off, we would have taken it and, on reflection, it was the right outcome.'

'It is great to see that even with nine players missing from last week's squad that we could get a team out and they were excellent. It is especially good to see the younger lads coming in and showing up well.'

During the week, Thistle were drawn in the fourth round of the FA Cup against New Farm Loch AFC, a Kilmarnock-based team plying their trade in the Ayrshire Premier Division.

New Farm, first division champions in 2018/19, will host SLT on Saturday December 4.

Alan Gray said: 'We're looking forward to going up against New Farm Loch. They are a very good side and will prove a stern test, I'm sure.'

'That being said, with the quality we have in our squad we'll be a match for anyone at this level when we are firing on all cylinders.'

This Saturday, the Jags host old sparring partners Helensburgh for another league game at the Kinlochleven Astro.

Cutting edge stuff at Claggan Park

Fort William Football Club isn't letting the grass grow under its feet during the enforced ban on home games at Claggan Park.

Due to the renovation of the playing surface at the ground, the grass is now growing strongly and consistently, and to help keep it to regulation length the club has bought an impressive tractor mower designed for just this purpose.

It will allow quicker grass cutting and is more flexible in the areas it can reach as it has retractable blades.

The new machine is part financed by the remains of the pitch fund donations from earlier in the year and a donation from Northern Light Consulting Limited. Fifty per

cent has been paid and the remainder is due over a set period.

Sponsor Greg Riddle of Northern Light Consulting Limited along with his son, Angus, who plays in the junior side, met up with club groundsman Mark Rydings to see the new mower in action.

The club would appreciate help from any company or individual that would like to donate towards the purchase of the mower.

Sponsor Greg Riddle of Northern Light Consulting Limited with his son Angus and club groundsman Mark Rydings. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.





The keen young rugby players who took part in the Dalriada tournament at Banavie. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

Pupils throw themselves into rugby finale

On a glorious autumnal afternoon in Fort William, Lochaber Rugby Club hosted the final Dalriada tournament of the year with a fantastic turnout of players from Campbeltown, Lochgilhead, Oban, Taynuilt, Mull and Fort William.

There was some fantastic rugby on display from both age groups with great running and cracking tackles coupled with loads of energy and enthusiasm. In the P4/5 age group, Mid Argyll were the team to beat and produced amazing play to remain undefeated on the day. This means Mid Argyll win the autumn series for the P4/5 group after being pushed all the way by Kintyre who finish in second. Special mentions to Etive Vikings and Mull who continue to improve game by game.

In the P6/7 games, Kintyre were going for the clean sweep at this age group. Organisers were delighted to see Mull compete in this category for the first time this season and they will have learnt a lot from

this outing. The Lochaber team were keen to win their home tournament and defended with real vigour in every game with some fantastic tackling. It was their defensive efforts which laid the foundation for their victory, with visiting teams struggling to match their physicality, and they didn't lose a game to secure victory.

Kintyre may have lost the battle, but they won the war and were deserved winners of the autumn series by being consistent over the four festivals. The next festival takes place in March 2022 when the focus switches to the secondary schools.

This Thursday, there is a girls' development day at Lochgilhead Joint Campus from noon until 3pm with Lochgilhead High School hosting Tobermory, Oban and Islay High Schools to play games at Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18 in the first event between the schools.

The hope is that each school/club will host an event over the coming months.



Mull v Lochaber. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos



Players from Mull and Lochaber during the Dalriada festival finale at Lochaber Rugby Club at the weekend. Photograph: Iain Ferguson

More photographs at www.lochabertimes.co.uk

Players get down to business during Oban Lorne's game against Lochaber at the Dalriada festival finale at the weekend. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos



Fort William FC take a league battering in Banff

Fort William Football Club fell to its heaviest defeat of the season so far on Saturday when they were put to the sword by Banff outfit Deveronvale.

Hitting the road once more, the managerless team were beaten 10-0 by the Aberdeenshire side.

This weekend, Fort William travel to Moray to tackle Highland League high flyers Rothes FC, while the much-anticipated friendly against South Lochaber Thistle takes place at Claggan Park on Wednesday December 1.

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Oban Lorne v Lochaber. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

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High hopes Nevis Range will be a 'Cycling Worlds' venue

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

Hopes are building in Lochaber that the region's Nevis Range mountain resort will be named as a venue for part of the biggest cycling event ever to take place anywhere in the world.

It was back in 2019 that Scotland was announced as the host country for the first UCI Cycling World Championships, to be staged across 10 days in August 2023. The event will bring together 13 existing individual cycling disciplines into one global mega event.

With more than 2,600 competitors from around 120 countries, an expected one million spectators and more than one billion viewers worldwide, the 'Cycling Worlds' will be one of the top 10 sporting events on the planet.

A nationwide series of events that promise to bring the 'power of the bike' to the whole of Scotland, it is a format that the governing body plans to repeat every four years.

Glasgow was already announced as the venue for eight of the 13 world championships that will comprise the overall event and this was followed in September of this year with news of Dumfries and Galloway becoming the first venue outside Glasgow to be unveiled as a host.

Glasgow will host championships for BMX, road cycling, track cycling and track



Right: Lochaber Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Frazer Coupland delivers the welcome address at Thursday's Tourism Day in Ben Nevis Distillery. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

para-cycling amongst others, while Dumfries and Galloway will be home to the para-cycling road championships.

Venues for the remaining four disciplines will be announced over the coming months, including championships for mountain biking, cross-country, downhill, and marathon and cross-country eliminator competitions.

And those attending last



Thursday's Tourism Day event at Ben Nevis Distillery - part of Lochaber Ideas Week - heard that Nevis Range's pedigree in holding world-class mountain biking competitions should

see it the front-runner to be named as host for the downhill mountain bike races.

Gavin Ross, from the Scottish Government Major Events Department, said organisers of

Hopes are high that Nevis Range's world-class mountain biking runs will see it host events as part of the 2023 championships.

the Cycling Worlds had dedicated delivery teams in place, one of which was looking at the supply of high quality, value for money accommodation available in each area at the time of the championships.

'We want people to have a positive memory of Scotland, of this area and elsewhere, providing opportunities and new long-term markets for this area and Scotland to think about,' said Mr Ross.

As well as the Cycling Worlds being used as a vehicle to get more people of all ages out on bikes, not just for competition, but for health and environmental reasons, plus aiding recovery from the Covid pandemic, there are hopes it will showcase Scotland as a year-round visitor destination.

Naturally, the question on the lips of everyone present was when it would be known if Fort William had been selected as a championships venue.

Mr Ross answered: 'At the moment, the known venues are only Glasgow and Dumfriesshire. I am speaking in general terms that this event

is going to be delivered across Scotland, so that is a question I cannot answer.'

However, giving his view, Frazer Coupland, chief executive officer of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, said, while he was 'not a betting man', it was hard to see the downhill mountain biking championship going anywhere other than the Nevis Range resort on the outskirts of Fort William.

'There isn't another downhill track equivalent to Fort William anywhere else in Scotland. I very much would like and hope to see the downhill event in this area and hopefully that may be announced soon,' he added.

'I think, I suspect, that the mountain bike cross-country and marathon will be in the Tweed Valley. We don't know that for definite but that's sort of our understanding of it.'

See page four for more on this story.

More sport on pages 41, 42 and 43.

The Lochaber Times: 95p

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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 25 November, 2021** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

25	0253 1.7 0838 3.5 TH 1519 2.1 2107 3.1	27	0438 1.9 1030 3.2 SA 1756 2.2 C 2348 2.9	29	0147 3.0 0654 1.8 M 1342 3.4 2020 1.8	1	0317 3.4 0857 1.3 W 1523 3.8 2152 1.2
26	0340 1.8 0925 3.3 F 1629 2.2 2206 3.0	28	0545 1.9 1204 3.2 SU 1917 2.0	30	0237 3.2 0758 1.6 TU 1438 3.6 2109 1.5	2	0354 3.7 0950 1.0 TH 1605 4.0 2233 1.0

FORT WILLIAM WEATHER

Thursday Light cloud and a gentle breeze Temperatures 3°C to 5°C.	Friday Light rain showers and a moderate breeze Temperatures 3°C to 7°C.	Saturday Sleet showers and a moderate breeze Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.	Sunday Light cloud and a gentle breeze Temperatures 2°C to 4°C.
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FRIDAY FORECAST

Ardrishaig	-5.35
Campbeltown	-5.30
Crinan	-0.47
Islay Port Ellen	2.00
Lochboisdale	+0.30
Mallaig	+0.25
Portree	+0.55
Tobermory	+0.16
Dover	+5.30

HIGH 7 LOW 3 2 MPH